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THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

By the same author

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EDWARD VII AND HIS TIMES

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DICKENS

VOLTAIRE

POETS AND PROPHETS

A HISTORY OF ENGLAND

(Fiction)

COLONEL BRAMBLE

THE FAMILY CIRCLE

THE WEIGHER OF SOULS

RICOCHETS

ETC.

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

by
ANDRÉ MAUROIS



Translated from the French by
JAMES WHITALL

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CONTENTS

I	THE INVITATION TO TRAVEL	11
II	WESTMOUTH UNIVERSITY	21
III	302 LINCOLN AVENUE	29
IV	A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS	39
V	. . . ET DONA FERENTES	51
VI	SUZANNE	59
VII	ACTIONS AND REACTIONS	71
VIII	MURIEL WILTON	79
IX	SUZANNE STRIKES BACK	85
X	THE INVENTOR IS BLAMED	95
XI	PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION	102
XII	PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS	113
XIII	TWO INCIDENTS	120
XIV	THE PSYCHOGRAPH COMPANY, INC.	126
XV	MAXIME HEURTELOUP	139
XVI	SURPRISES	148
XVII	PSYCHOGRAMS	156
XVIII	'GRAMMATICI CERTANT . . .'	167
XIX	HENRIETTE LEMONNIER	175
XX	EPILOGUE	185

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

THE INVITATION TO TRAVEL

THOUGH I am a professor of French literature and my thesis on Balzac's sources occasioned the favourable comment of my colleagues and other less exacting critics, I have never produced any imaginative work. I confess that in my young days, when I was, as are most adolescents, of a restless and extravagant turn of mind, I frequently felt the impulse to try my hand at fiction. Had I yielded to this temptation my career as a professor might have been seriously compromised. I resisted, and am now the better for it. The narrative I am beginning to-day is therefore my first effort in this field of writing.

On the other hand, it cannot actually be called a work of the imagination, since the narrative is a true one even in its smallest details. In writing it I am obeying an historian's sense of duty more than an artist's impulse. Having participated, in spite of myself, in the discovery of the thought-reading machine, so widely known for several years under

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

the name of the 'psychograph', I fancy my memories of this extraordinary episode may be of interest. Owing to certain intimate details I cannot publish the narrative while Suzanne and I are alive, but I authorize our children or our friends to find a publisher for it after we are both dead.

When the adventure began, we were at Caen. I would like to explain why it was that my wife and I were pleased with my appointment there. Suzanne's people were from Rouen. When her father, M. Cauvin-Lequeux, a member of the Rouen City Council, retired from public life he did not leave the city where he had many friends and two married daughters. Marie-Claude's husband was Maxime Heurteloup, a local manufacturer; Henriette's was Jerome Lemonnier, a lawyer without clients. I will say at once, since I have mentioned my wife's sisters, that Suzanne was sincerely devoted to Marie-Claude, a woman of no particular charm or intelligence, but she got on rather badly with Henriette, whose mind and beauty I greatly admired. Their husbands both irritated me; Maxime, though a decent enough man and well thought of by his colleagues in the cotton trade, seemed to me hard and arrogant. Jerome was charming, lazy, and unscrupulous; his one idea was

THE INVITATION TO TRAVEL

to make use of his wife's family and he thereby caused Henriette much unhappiness

In the rue de Fontenelle, where the Prefecture was situated, my father-in-law had bought a five-story house; he occupied the second himself, the Lemonniers had the third, and he let the other two. I feel obliged to speak of these details because the rue de Fontenelle – the family headquarters – played a disastrously powerful role in Suzanne's life. She jealously watched over the property which would perhaps one day be hers (she was continually urging her father to leave her the whole house). The opinions, the prejudices, and the disgusts of the rue de Fontenelle seemed to her to be more important than the thoughts and feelings of the great men of our time.

There were three matters upon which I disagreed with the rue de Fontenelle. One was the education of our very young children. My mother-in-law scolded me continually for driving them beyond their strength without sufficient regard for their health (this driving consisted of my insistence upon their learning at least to read and write before they went to the lycée). Another was Suzanne's existence: I had 'sequestered' her, they said, 'a gifted and brilliant woman' (as a matter of fact, once away

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

from 'the rue de Fontenelle', she made no complaint whatsoever of our modest, secluded, and wholly agreeable life). The third, and unquestionably the most serious, was politics, there was a hopeless incompatibility between my father-in-law's ideas and my own.

We were both of the middle classes, but France has had her Guelphs and her Ghibellines ever since 1789. Suzanne's family was still conservative; it had been successively Bonapartist, Orleanist, Republican adherent, and Melinist. My own was in the Opposition during the July Monarchy, Republican under the Empire, Gambettist, then Radical, and I even had a Socialist uncle. At the time of our marriage France seemed for several years to have been brought to some sort of internal agreement by the war; former differences were easily forgotten. I was an officer then, and, to M. Cauvin-Lequeux who had undoubtedly read neither Stendhal nor Paul-Louis Courier, my uniform was symbolic and proved me to be a right-thinking man. When peace came, the old ill-will and distrust flamed up again, and after the election of 1924 I was considered an outcast by everyone in the rue de Fontenelle except my sister-in-law, Henriette. Family dinners there became difficult for me; each week I was obliged to be either

THE INVITATION TO TRAVEL

silent or acrimonious, and, on leaving, to submit to my wife's complaints of my speechlessness or my intolerance.

It will now be understood why, proud of having been appointed to a post at the Rouen lycée, I made all haste to obtain my doctor's degree and to ask for a professorship. I succeeded in getting an appointment; Caen was an ideal place for us. The old Jansenist city has beauty and serenity; the university is ancient and renowned; the climate excellent. And most important of all I had my wife and children to myself. Suzanne was near enough to Rouen for a plunge, whenever she felt the need of one, into the atmosphere of the rue de Fontenelle which, for her, possessed the revivifying qualities of oxygen. It must be noted that we were the most united and even the most affectionate family that one could imagine. Now that my wife could visit her father alone, there was no further conflict between us. Our two children were in good health, my pupils were bearable, and my colleagues congenial. We were as happy as any two human beings can be, in spite of the inevitable small differences which arise, it seems to me, in all conjugal establishments.

One day in April of 1925 my wife suddenly

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

entered my study, where I was preparing a lecture on Malherbe, and told me that an old American gentleman wanted to see me.

‘An old American! What’s his name?’

‘Spencer . . . President Spencer. Here’s his card.’

I read: ‘Doctor Theodore B Spencer, President of Westmouth University.’

‘I don’t know him,’ I said to Suzanne, ‘but Westmouth is one of the most venerable institutions in the United States and its president is an important person. I’ll see him at once.’

She brought in a man of about sixty; he was clean-shaven and he looked at me pleasantly through tortoise-shell rimmed spectacles. I got the impression at once that he was a kindly person. He spoke French very slowly with ecclesiastical unction and told me that Westmouth University, of which he was president, hoped from now on to bring over a professor from France every year to lecture to its students upon a French writer.

‘We have received,’ he told me, ‘quite a large donation for this chair. The wealthiest manufacturer in our district is an Alsatian immigrant who desires to encourage by every possible means the teaching of French in the United States. The head of our romance language department, Professor

THE INVITATION TO TRAVEL

Macpherson, thinks that we should begin with Balzac because he is the author in whom our young men would be most likely to take an interest, and that your work and your thesis indicate that you are the man to lecture on him. We have been told that you speak a little English, and that will make your life with us much more agreeable. I was coming to France anyway, and I have taken it upon myself to run out to Caen and offer you the appointment.'

'It would be very difficult . . .' I began.

He raised his hand to stop me and continued: 'Let me say a word as to the material side of the proposition. The salary would be three thousand dollars for one semester, that is, about four months. We would pay your passage, and that of your wife as well, since we are particularly anxious for Mme Dumoulin to accompany you, and the university will rent you a small furnished house at a very moderate figure; you would give two regular lectures a week and have some informal conferences with your best students. Now, Monsieur Dumoulin, that's the message I had for you; my task is accomplished and I advise you most strongly in my official capacity, and as a friend also, to accept the appointment. You will not regret it.'

Full of surprise and hesitation, I answered that I

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

was aware of the high standing of Westmouth and of Macpherson's ability (his linguistic atlas of Southern Auvergne is well known), that I was deeply touched at being chosen, but that I did not know whether the Ministry and the Faculty Department would replace me for the necessary months or whether my wife would agree to spend so much time away from her children and her parents.

'I know, I know,' he said, smiling. 'You French people like to have family conclaves, often including distant cousins, in which the pros and cons of a project can be discussed at length. I've often noticed this and I must tell you that Mrs Spencer and I love France. We spend all our vacations here, visiting little provincial towns like Caudebec, Brantôme, Vézelay. Yes, we've explored your country thoroughly; perhaps we know it better than you do. If you come to Westmouth, Mrs. Spencer will see to it that Mme Dumoulin enjoys herself . . . Therefore I can easily understand that you may want a few days to consider the proposal, but if you do not accept it I must find someone else, so will you be good enough to make your decision fairly soon? I am sure you will have no trouble in getting the Ministry's consent, for I have already talked with the – what is he called? – Director of Higher Education? Yes.

THE INVITATION TO TRAVEL

He is ready to give his authorization. . . . Well, good-bye, Professor Dumoulin.'

Suzanne and I spent that evening discussing President Spencer's proposal. The thought of leaving our children was unbearable and it would be far too expensive to take them with us. Suzanne suggested leaving them with her parents in the rue de Fontenelle, but I had two serious objections to this: my mother, who was very jealous of my mother-in-law, would protest vigorously; also the arrangement would give my mother-in-law too much freedom for the application of her educational principles which I considered to be dangerous. My wife seemed to be tempted by the salary, and I called her attention to the fact that our living expenses would be much higher in America and that we should have to keep our house in Caen, on account of our furniture and my books and papers. But the journey was an alluring one and it would interest me to bring knowledge of the real Balzac to American students; and above all, Dr. Spencer had attracted us both by his eagerness and his integrity. I wrote to him my acceptance, telling him that we would arrive in America at the end of September, as he wished.

I soon had reason to be pleased at my quick decision before Suzanne could consult her parents, for

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

the rue de Fontenelle rapidly mobilized itself against the project, its combined forces were difficult to combat, since, as was generally the case, none of its members had the slightest understanding of the matter under discussion. M. Cauvin-Lequeux, who, I am sure, had never seen an American in his life, hated the one hundred and thirty million inhabitants of the United States with vigour and violence. He upbraided me for proposing to drag his daughter to a country where she would certainly be carried off by gangsters, corrupted by bootleggers, and sent, an innocent woman, to the electric chair in accordance with a barbaric code of justice. This fanciful picture so terrified Suzanne that she might have changed her mind if my mother-in-law, propelled by the twofold pleasure of snatching the children away from my sinister influence and from the rival coddling of their other grandmother, had not finally taken my side in the argument. Once the front line of the rue de Fontenelle was broken, it became vulnerable, and we sailed at the appointed time on the *France*.

WESTMOUTH UNIVERSITY

WE were enchanted by Westmouth. Though I did not share my father-in-law's prejudices, I had been told many tales about New York and Chicago, and I was prepared for a country bristling with skyscrapers, roaring with motor horns, and peopled by an incongruous mixture of races. Such was my actual impression on passing rapidly through several large cities, but to our intense surprise and delight, Westmouth was very like a little eighteenth-century town in England. Founded about 1750, in a part of the country which was then completely uncivilized, for the purpose of gathering the Indians together and preaching the gospel to them, the university had preserved its charming old buildings; the most unusual of these was its founder's dwelling — a graceful little cottage built of wood in the middle of the campus.

The campus was a wide meadow, almost completely encircled by the curve of a river. The other buildings were grouped thereon, the oldest ones

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

being used for the offices of the president and the dean. The newer edifices were, most of them, examples of 'college Gothic', a style which, in the United States, appears to be an obsession with academic architects. Some of these colleges were cloistered and occasionally there were students' rooms or lecture-halls opening on to the enclosure. Each college bore the name of its donor. The lecture-room in which I gave my course was called 'Higgins 65', being room 65 of the edifice donated to Westmouth by John Higgins, the harvester king whose bright-coloured reapers and mowers I had often seen in the fields round about Caen without suspecting that I would soon meet their manufacturer.

I wish to state at once that I was shocked at the excessive power in the hands of the alumni of American universities. Westmouth, as are the best of her sister institutions, is privately endowed and receives no state subsidy. She exists by means of donations and the revenues accruing from her huge estate. A board of trustees controls all expenditures, appoints the president, and confers with him on important matters. One cannot help admiring the generosity of these alumni who know where to put their hands on one, two, or three hundred thousand

WESTMOUTH UNIVERSITY

dollars if the president can convince them that such a sum of money is necessary for the maintenance of the university's prestige, or for an increase in professors' salaries, but one must regret the power that goes with mere money. Fancy the Sorbonne changing its curriculum at the request of an automobile manufacturer! This is exactly what occurred at Westmouth when old Scripps insisted, against the wishes of the faculty, upon the incorporation of a business school, and also – I must confess it – the chair I myself occupied had been founded by Morgenstein, a manufacturer of chemicals.

Another result of the power of the alumni is the importance – excessive in my opinion – which is given to sports at Westmouth and her sister institutions. Football in winter and baseball in spring are the two high spots of university life. The games played every Saturday against rival teams drew between fifty and sixty thousand people to the little town. Naturally the old scholars who came from a distance to witness these games were irritated when there was a series of defeats. I myself heard John Higgins say with some severity to President Spencer: 'Mr. President, we want less scholarship and more victories.' It sometimes seemed to me that this might be an integral part of the Westmouth

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

programme and that this or that coach might be more highly paid than a professor of philosophy, or than I was myself

Let me say a few words about the house which was reserved for us at 302 Lincoln Avenue. It was secluded among the trees in a little community of professors' dwellings divided into squares by quiet streets in which there were few signs of life except the singing of birds and the leaping of squirrels in the maples and sycamores. Later on, M. Cauvin-Lequeux refused to believe my statement that there were fewer motors to be seen in the Westmouth streets than in those of Rouen. It was nevertheless true. The students were not permitted to have them, and few visitors came to town except when there was a game or a dance.

We had, as did all my colleagues, a little garden; no hedge or wall enclosed it and an uninterrupted expanse of green lawn surrounded the twelve houses in our block. My father-in-law had warned us against gangsters and kidnappers, but the tranquillity of Westmouth was complete. If one of the householders was obliged to be away from home for several days, he left his front door unlocked so that the postman might leave letters on the hall table,

WESTMOUTH UNIVERSITY

and he knew that they would be perfectly safe there until his return.

President and Mrs Spencer reigned supreme over this little world of three or four thousand souls – professors, students, and servants. I use the word ‘reigned’ advisedly, because the president’s authority in no way resembled that of the head of a French university whose power was superficial, administrative, and in any case carefully controlled.

No Congressman, no state Governor, no federal officer had the right to interfere with Dr. Spencer. He had been chosen by the board of trustees, would not be removed unless he committed some grave fault, and was free to follow the dictates of his own conscience. His power was very nearly absolute, and I always thought of Mrs. Spencer as the wife of the governor of a distant colony, or even the queen of some little principality. She ruled over the students and the faculty households with a maternal tyranny that was just and kind, but inflexible. Upon our arrival she undertook to inform Suzanne as to her duties.

‘Well, Mrs. Dumoulin, you’ve got some full days before you. To-morrow morning two hundred visiting-cards will be left at your house by the faculty ladies. Naturally you will start immediately to

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

return these courtesies, but don't be in too great a hurry; you will have the rest of the week to get through it. You must call on the dean's wife, Mrs. Phillips, first; she is rather touchy. Then you will call upon Mrs. Macpherson, because her husband is the head of our romance language department to which you belong. Professor Macpherson, the president, and I will attend M. Dumoulin's first lecture, and you will be there, too. After that we'll leave the professor alone with his students. By the way, speaking of students, has anyone told you, Mrs. Dumoulin, about the weekly tea you will have to arrange for those of them who attend your husband's lectures? Wednesday will be the best day, since it is the least full. This will give them an opportunity to speak French with you. And, oh, I almost forgot: the students prefer ice-cream to hot drinks of any sort. Yes — even in winter. I'll take you to the confectioner's. . . . There are two butchers in Westmouth, Mrs. Dumoulin, you will go to Hoffmann.'

Mrs. Spencer's monologue went on for some time. Her self-confidence and her volubility were a little frightening to Suzanne on her first day, but the better we got to know her the more we liked her. She was kindness itself, full of common sense, and

WESTMOUTH UNIVERSITY

she steered us cleverly and gently among the reefs of etiquette and sensitiveness that lay hidden beneath the calm waters upon which we were embarked. Mrs. Spencer was dictatorial, because this was her only means of commanding respect and of keeping the peace in her principality. She was an admirable organizer, and the entertaining of a thousand promoted students or a thousand graduating seniors was no problem to her at 'Lakeview'; nor did she ever fail to recognize a football ace, or an editor of the Westmouth *Argonaut*; she was always ready with a pleasant word for everyone and knew how to make the best use of the faculty wives upon these important occasions.

'Good afternoon, Mrs. Dumoulin,' she said. 'You're looking younger than ever; our Westmouth air suits you marvellously. I hear your husband's last lecture was remarkable. Well, well . . . now go and help feed those boys. Mrs. Phillips will show you what to do. I think you're in charge of the cakes . . . Good afternoon, Mrs. Hickey. How are the professor's researches going? Let me see, I think you're to pour tea this afternoon, with Mrs. Griggs . . . Dear, dear! Good afternoon, Mrs. Waldmann. I know about your becoming a grandmother this morning. Think of that! A very young

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

grandmother, I must say! . . I think you're at the sandwich table. . '

As I set down her words here, I can see her kindly face and the lovely Lakeview gardens. The endless procession of professors and their wives, Suzanne looking fresh and cool in a flowered linen frock, and the young faces of the students. I cannot look back upon those months without emotion, for, in spite of certain inevitable incidents, our sojourn in that young confident country was far happier than this difficult existence in Europe.

302 LINCOLN AVENUE

THE house that Mrs. Spencer had chosen for us was, like almost all Westmouth houses, cottage style and built of wood; it resembled an over-sized pioneer's cabin. I believe one must take into consideration the 'frontier' element in America if one is really to understand her. As soon as one leaves the large cities, this element becomes evident. In many American youths I have noticed a kind of nostalgia for the prairie, the forests, and the free life of the trapper. Almost all of our Westmouth students belong to an organization which provides cabins in the neighbouring woods where a member in need of solitude can spend two or three days at a time, doing his own cooking and meditating at his ease under the stars.

Suzanne, who enjoyed long conversations with cooks and chambermaids, was annoyed at not having permanent servants, but I was rather amused by the picturesque life we led. A handsome negress called Rosita came in by the hour to do our cooking;

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

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THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

if we telephoned for a taxi, a young man would draw up at our door in one a few moments later, hatless, coatless, with his shirt open at the neck, Shelley fashion; a communal gardener, Mr. Bamann, kept our lawn and paths neat; an amiable old Dutchman, who was something of a philosopher, took care of our furnace. 'Professor,' he said to me one day, 'do you consider English a musical language?' 'That depends upon who speaks it,' I answered. 'When a great English actress recites Shakespeare, it is ravishing, but if it is spoken by you or by me . . .' 'No, Professor,' he interrupted me, while satisfying himself that my electric refrigerator was functioning properly, 'English is not a musical language Dutch is a musical language.'

My chief, Professor Macpherson, lived next to us on the right. He was a mild-tempered man, though fanatical, and I had great respect for him. He was completely absorbed by his job of teaching old French and Provençal, and it seemed extraordinary and rather admirable that a descendant of Scottish Puritans should devote his life and that of a few adolescents from Chicago and Kansas City to comparing five versions of an obscure eleventh-century *chanson de geste*, to praising Albéric de Besançon or Gautier de Lisle, and to editing a linguistic

atlas of France. But Westmouth thought it quite natural, and the department of romance languages employed several assistants, chosen for their accuracy of ear, whose task it was to go through our provinces, taking careful notes of the deformation of ordinary words.

When Professor Macpherson discovered that Suzanne was from Rouen, he became intensely interested in her delicate Normandy accent and tried to find out from her whether the peasant pronunciation of the word *chat*, which in Normandy is almost *cat*, was ever heard in Rouen, Havre, or Dieppe, and in what quarters and classes of society; and he was slightly contemptuous on finding that her ideas upon the subject were extremely vague. Mrs. Macpherson walked across the lawn in the moonlight on our first evening to say that she wanted to be on a neighbourly footing with us, and we soon realized that she had used the word 'neighbourly' in its fullest and most generous sense. In France this sort of intercourse rarely exists outside the lower classes.

On our left lived Professor Hickey, the physicist — one of the glories of Westmouth; at the age of thirty-eight, he had been awarded the Nobel prize for his researches in the composition of the atom.

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

Hickey was an Englishman, a pupil of Thomson and Rutherford, and the Westmouth authorities, almost as proud of their laboratories as of their football teams, had acquired the services of this man of genius and had given him very nearly unlimited funds for his investigations. There was a Mrs. Hickey, a rather attractive little woman, but during our first fortnight we saw little of this couple whose ideas of neighbourliness seemed to differ from those of the Americans. The latter overwhelmed us with attentions that soon broke down our very French resolutions to live a secluded life; the Hickeys, in true British fashion, greeted us politely when we met, but made it clear that they did not wish to be intimate with us.

A chance occurrence, however, brought us into closer relation with them in the third week of our sojourn at Westmouth, and I feel bound to describe it in detail, because it is the first episode in the adventure that I have undertaken to narrate.

Hickey wanted an article in a French scientific journal translated for his research work, and asked for my help one day as I was leaving the lecture-room. I have always had, despite my ignorance of them, a lively interest in scientific matters, and I agreed enthusiastically to give my colleague what-

ever assistance lay in my power. He asked me to come to his house as soon as possible, and that very evening found me comfortably ensconced in an arm-chair in his study, struggling to read aloud in halting English a translation of the somewhat difficult French article he had put in my hands. It concerned the action of cosmic rays upon living people. I did the best I could, but found some of the scientific terms hard to render in English. At about ten o'clock our work was done, and Hickey produced two glasses, soda water, and whisky.

'What about prohibition?' I exclaimed. 'You're putting me in an embarrassing position. Only this morning President Spencer requested my strict observance of the law, he personally considers the law absurd, but the Westmouth faculty, he said, had to be above suspicion.'

'Those are fine words,' said Hickey, with a laugh, 'but I'm not an American, and besides, I buy my whisky from the sheriff who is supposed to prevent the sale of it. Therefore I have no scruples and you can push yours off on me. Drink in peace. I hope all this work hasn't bored you too much.'

'Very much the contrary; I did not know you had taken up biology. I thought that you were a physicist exclusively.'

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

'So I am,' he said. 'My own investigations concern matters of pure physics '

'And may I ask . . . '

' . . . what their objective is? Oh, it's pretty technical. How can I explain briefly? . . . I'm trying to accomplish what the alchemists of the Middle Ages called transmutation, that is, the transformation of certain substances into certain others. Let's take an example; for instance, I hope before long to be able by systematically bombarding an atom of silver, to change it into cadmium.'

'Which would prove . . . '

'Merely that such a transformation was possible.'

'Do you believe with the alchemists that man will one day succeed in making gold, silver, and mercury?'

'Without the slightest doubt,' he answered, sitting opposite me, glass in hand. 'It seems to me probable that syntheses of all the simple bodies will be accomplished. It is even possible that they may all be different forms of one simple substance.'

'But substances made synthetically cost more, I'm told, than natural ones; so of what use would they be?'

'There is the scientific interest first of all, and then it may not always be more expensive to make them. This is no longer true of colours, and chemists produce better perfumes than flowers do.'

'And living substance? Are you a materialist and do you believe with Dr. Faustus, that you will be able to create little men in one of your retorts?'

'My dear Dumoulin, the idea that all scholars must be materialists is to-day rather naive. A physicist is bound to believe that natural phenomena are governed by laws; otherwise there would be no science and no scholars. But he realizes that these laws are only statistical, as are those which enable insurance companies to calculate that, out of one million people of the male sex, one hundred and fifty will commit suicide; the insurance companies can do this with exactitude and it is a useful calculation for them, but it tells us nothing about the individual men.'

'Do you believe,' I said, 'that you will one day produce living cells?'

'What do we know about human life and cells? Suppose, for instance, that an inhabitant of Sirius were studying the city of London through the ultra-powerful telescope, and that it looked to him as a cell would look to us. Well, one day out of seven (and our days are to him very brief moments) the centre of the cell seems unusually transparent and emptied of matter. Why? The Sirian does not know. But *we* understand the phenomenon

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

immediately; it is caused by the week-end exodus from the city. How could our Sirian know about our social laws, our English week-end holiday? He might be endowed with genius, but he would never be able to solve the problem of the cell's transparency on every seventh day. Now, we are just as mystified by the living cell as the Sirian is by the city of London. It is probable that the presence, in a primitive cell from which is to be born a human being, of certain inherited characteristics will one day be as easily perceived by the biologist as policemen on Fifth Avenue, but with our present equipment we are no nearer to solving these problems than the Sirian is to seeing policemen on Fifth Avenue.'

'Nevertheless, the article you asked me to translate this evening touched upon questions of that nature. Don't you admit that it would be interesting, even considering the present state of our knowledge, to investigate them?'

'Whenever I come across unexplored tracts I make little journeys through them for my own pleasure . . . but I'm a very poor host to-night. Your glass is empty. Have some more whisky and soda'

'I will, indeed! I am no great drinker in France, but this prohibition is getting on my nerves.'

He poured me a drink that was almost all whisky,

and we were presently, I know not by what association of ideas, talking of the possible effects of another war, especially a war in the air, upon the future of civilization. Then, no doubt owing to the whisky to which I was not accustomed, I sank into a long reverie, while Hickey, in his chair facing me, turned the pages of the article I had translated and studied some of the figures in it. About eleven I roused myself and went home across the lawn that separated our two houses. The night was cold and clear, and the sky crowded with stars. For an instant I was conscious, perfectly naturally, of being thousands of miles from my own country, and of actually *feeling* the distance. There was nothing of France here. the trees, the house, the autumn night – everything was different. Suzanne was awake, and I saw that she had been weeping.

‘Don’t ever leave me alone again,’ she said. ‘At Caen it doesn’t matter, but here . . .’

‘Were you frightened?’ I asked.

‘No, not in the least; but I feel terribly upset – the children are so far away.’

‘But you had a cable this morning.’

‘I know I did, but a cable is so short. Do you suppose they’re telling me the truth? Maman never wants to worry me.’

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

Until three in the morning she talked about the children, the rue de Fontenelle, her mother, my mother, the Cauvin-Lequeux estate, her sisters. Suzanne's thoughts revolved in a limited circle and she liked to discuss them with someone at least once a day. When her mother, her parlour-maid Jeanne, or the wives of the Caen professors were within reach, she could go on about family matters with them, but now I was obliged to take their places and I did not always do so very patiently. The Westmouth air was charged with electricity, and when two men shook hands sparks of understanding sometimes flashed between their palms.

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

SEVERAL days later the Hickeys asked us to dine with them, and we found, on arriving, that there were to be no other guests. This rather surprised us, for the other great ones of the faculty had given banquets in our honour. This party of four made serious conversation possible and I was greatly interested, but I fear the two ladies were bored. Immediately after dessert, in obedience to the English custom. Mrs. Hickey and Suzanne left the table and our host poured two glasses of excellent port purveyed by the sheriff, and sat down beside me. He then gave me a cigar, lit one for himself, and smoked for several moments in silence.

‘Dumoulin,’ he said, suddenly, ‘forgive me for asking you a personal question. It’s rather bad form, but we’re neither of us in our own country – we’re exiles, and that’s perhaps what gives me my excuse for asking – how shall I put it? – well, for asking why it is that you resign yourself so complacently to the idea of death. You’re still young, Dumoulin;

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

you have a charming wife, I'm told that you've had a brilliant career already. Why aren't you more enthusiastic about being alive?"

I looked at him in perfectly natural astonishment.

'And why the devil do you ask me that?' I exclaimed. 'Who told you that I didn't care about living?'

'Who told me?' he said 'No one but yourself '

'But I haven't opened my mouth since the ladies left us, and before that we talked, if I'm not mistaken, about your work and Westmouth morals; nothing was said at all about my zest for life or my lack of it.'

'Oh, it wasn't to-night,' he said, 'I mean last week.'

'Last week? I cannot remember discussing any such subject. I'm not given to confiding, I assure you; we hardly know one another.' I was beginning to be irritated by his strange persistence.

'What? Don't you remember our conversation? I described to you what a war in the air might mean if the peoples of Europe did not have the wisdom to keep calm. Then you were silent for rather a long time. Isn't that what happened?'

'Exactly.'

'Well - weren't you thinking at that point that

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

if such a catastrophe were to take place you would send your wife and children to a place called Lassoiché . . . ?’

‘No,’ I cut in, ‘La Saussaye. That is the village where my mother lives; but . . .’

‘Wait a moment. Didn’t you then imagine yourself, on the third day of the mobilization, rejoining the staff of the seventh division at ———, I couldn’t get the name of the town. “And there is every chance,” you said to yourself, “of my being killed as soon as the air raids begin. Then things will be in a fine muddle.” I will refrain from enumerating those “things”, because I really don’t wish to be too indiscreet. I have no desire to pry into your private life, but if you could just tell me . . .’

I felt the colour mounting to my cheeks in spite of myself.

‘Hickey,’ I cried, standing up, ‘this is hateful! Are you going in for mind-reading?’

I remembered now perfectly. I had imagined all this when he had spoken of a war in the air, but the thoughts had been fugitive ones and quickly followed by others. How had he known about them?

Hickey laid his big hand on my shoulder and gently forced me to sit down again.

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

'Don't be angry with me,' he said. 'It was wrong of me to violate your secrets and I apologize. But I've been making a few rather curious experiments and it happens that you unconsciously helped me in one of them. Please forgive me, and you may be certain that your thoughts have been permanently banished from my mind. Seriously, my dear fellow, what difference could it make to me whether your children went to Honolulu or Cape Town in case of war? Think of Balzac, the author to whom so much of your attention has been directed. The scholar, like the novelist, takes his material where he can find it. He is, like the artist — even more than the artist — impersonal. Drop that /offended manner, I beg of you. You are a scholar yourself in your own field, and I am sure you understand what I mean.'

Hickey's tone was so sincere and his good faith so evident that my curiosity got the better of my irritation.

'All right, I forgive you,' I said, 'for having used me as a guinea-pig, but I think I have the right to know what these experiments are that I have unwittingly taken part in. Have they any connection with your work on the atom? I confess that I don't see . . .'

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

'No connection at all,' he replied with a laugh. 'My regular work is quite another story, and I attach so little importance to this little discovery that I'm not even going to publish any statement regarding it. But it's a diverting game. . . . You've noticed that I have a state for hypotheses.'

'That's your profession'

'You're right; it is precisely my profession. I have developed many hypotheses, and several of them concern the nature of thought. Have you ever wondered, Dumoulin, what occurs in your brain when you think of objects or people *when they are absent*, or of events *after they have taken place*? Don't give me a professor's answer, quoting sources and texts. Take a concrete case. Think of any incident in your past.'

'All right. I'm thinking of a battle that I witnessed in nineteen-fifteen.'

'Excellent. How are you thinking about it? Do you see everything clearly?'

'Nothing is clear; there is a vague background of images. I see the trenches faintly, and shells bursting over a ruined farm about a hundred metres in front of us.'

'Can you see your commanding officer's face?'

'Captain Crouzet? Yes, certainly.'

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

'Can you see his face as you would see someone's face to-day? Could you draw it?'

'No - I don't draw; and anyhow his features are too confused. They vanish the moment I try to fix them.'

'Where exactly is this image? Before your eyes?'

'No, it is not; that is, not before my eyes as your face is, and the tablecloth and this glass of port. No, the image of the captain's face is behind my eyes, rather. It's a little as though I were looking at it with an inner eye, placed somewhere under my skull. But what are you getting at?'

'Just a moment, please. Think now of some abstract idea, of France and the United States, for instance.'

'I have done so,' I said, after a moment's silence.

'Good. What observations did you make?'

'To myself?'

'Naturally.'

'I thought: new country, old country; and at the same time I saw the canal leading from Caen to the sea, and the two rows of trees along its banks. I saw the Abbaye aux Hommes and the Lycée de Caen; then the façade of a skyscraper all perforated with windows; then the squirrels in my garden at Westmouth; and finally, a green-and-brown map in the

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

Vidal-Lablache atlas, the title of which, "Hypsometric Map", always seemed mysterious and beautiful to me as a child.'

'I see that words mingle with images Aren't these words clearer to you than the images?'

'Wait a moment . . . Yes, much clearer. I seem to pronounce these interior phrases distinctly, while the images are very confused and are continually being overlaid by others. In any case, my auditory sense has always been more acute than my visual.'

'I'm sure of it, that is one of the reasons why I chose you for my experiment.'

'But what experiment? I ask you again, Hickey; what are you getting at? What are you hunting for?'

He tapped his fingers on the table for a moment, as though reluctant to speak.

'I'm going to tell you,' he said, 'but on one condition — you must not speak of the experiments to anyone. They are not exact enough for me to reveal them to my fellow scientists, and these men would be justly offended if they were to hear of them from you who are in a sense an outsider here at Westmouth, or, if you like, a visitor. Can I count on your discretion?'

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

‘That goes without saying ’

‘Well, then, here it is. I have believed for a long time that thought, since its rudiments can be called physical phenomena – that is, images and sounds – could be captured by the ordinary methods at a physicist’s disposal. Please understand that I do not at all maintain that thought is merely a physical phenomenon; a scientist must study the observable signs and variations of phenomena, the essential nature of which will always escape him. Now physicists have long noticed that every function of the body, including thought, is accompanied by physical phenomena. Professor Berger, of the University of Iéna, has investigated what he calls cerebral undulations. By placing his subjects in a sort of insulating coffin, a certain Dr. Max has been able to record and amplify cerebral emissions. For the last two or three years I have been trying to do this kind of thing with the idea that cerebral images, like the one you said you could see a moment ago from under your skull, might be captured – that is, recorded by means of an apparatus something like the “belinograph”.’

‘In other words, you wanted to film people’s thoughts?’

‘Exactly that; but I must tell you at once that I

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

have not succeeded I could not succeed, because, as you yourself described just now, the images are confused and rapidly overlaid by others.'

'Perhaps you would get a picture of this confusion on your film.'

'Though my wife has been patience itself in helping me, I have never been able to record anything that is worth studying. On the other hand, the "interior language" of a person lost in thought is a very definite physical phenomenon. It is manifested by movements of the tongue and the larynx, imperceptible to the eye but sufficient to produce sound waves.'

'Really? I should think the person would merely have the illusion of pronouncing words and would actually not be speaking at all.'

'You are mistaken. You need only to observe yourself for a moment to realize it. Think of a phrase now.'

'I've done it.'

'What is the phrase?'

'A line from Racine, "Le jour n'est pas plus pur".'

'When you think of that line, do you hear it?'

'Yes - I can still hear it.'

'Where do you hear it?'

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

'Let me listen again. . . . I hear it in my mouth, more exactly, at the top of my palate and the base of my nose.'

'Think of a scale. Don't you notice that if you sing "inwardly" your throat shapes itself to produce the different notes?'

'Wait a moment. . . . Yes, you're quite right.'

'Can you *think* a note that is too high for you to sing?'

'I don't believe I can.'

'Neither can I. Why? Because the words and notes that one is able to *think* are actually formed in the larynx. So much so that if you were to sink into a sufficiently profound reverie—if, for instance, you presently forgot that I was here—you would actually be talking to yourself. Sometimes isolated phrases are uttered by a preoccupied subject; sometimes an invalid suffering from insomnia will have long conversations with himself. In short, every man talks his thoughts—lunatics a little more distinctly than sane men. One of your countrymen, a Bordeaux doctor, has invented a "laryngograph" with which he records the thoughts of the insane. Rubber tubes connect the patient's larynx with a diaphragm and a recording cylinder. It is quite simple to read these vibrations.'

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

'That is curious and very interesting, but in my case, Hickey, you did not, so far as I know, attach any rubber tubes to my larynx the other night.'

'No - in your case I could not use that apparatus; it is too visible and would have aroused your suspicion. The thing had to be perfected, and that is what I have done.'

'How?'

'I won't bore you with technical details. I use very sensitive microphones and copper wires instead of the direct contact of rubber tubes. By this means the vibrations are transmitted to a recording disc and all I have to do is to play this record on an ordinary gramophone.'

'It's amazing and diabolical! Is that how you took down my private thoughts the other night? Can I hear the record myself?'

'Certainly.'

'Where was the microphone?'

'The chair you sat in was surrounded by hidden microphones. There was one in the back of the chair, one in the lamp, one in the table drawer. But I'm telling you all my secrets. I count on your silence, Dumoulin.'

'But you've just shown me, Hickey, that there is no such thing as silence.'

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

He got up, and I rose, too. He took me affectionately by the arm.

'I'll be satisfied with the ordinary kind of silence. So far, I'm the only one who can hear what people are thinking '

As we entered the drawing-room, I noticed at once, and not without apprehension, that Suzanne was sitting in the perilous chair. Engaged in animated talk with Mrs. Hickey, she was clearly not indulging in reverie. To her great surprise, however, I made her get up.

'You'll be more comfortable, darling, on the sofa,' I told her.

Hickey gave me such an amused look that I wondered whether the sofa where poor Suzanne now sat was not also surrounded by those treacherously infallible ears.

... ET DONA FERENTES .

I WAS never able to find out from Hickey whether or not he had recorded Suzanne's 'interior language' on the evening of which I have just spoken. We had rapidly become much more intimate with him and his wife, and Suzanne had begun to enjoy seeing Gertrude Hickey – a conventional Englishwoman, fond of dogs and gardening, but gentle and forthcoming; she had several delightful children and Suzanne loved to play with them. And it was a keen pleasure to me to talk with Hickey in his leisure hours; he had an astonishingly original mind, and I often crossed the lawn that separated our two houses and looked discreetly in at the open window. If the Hickeys were alone and seemed unoccupied, I ventured to ring their door-bell.

This friendship was the more valuable to me, because, for the first time since our marriage, our perfect relationship was undergoing difficulties. It seems to me now, after the passage of ten years, that we were both responsible for this misunderstanding.

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

My wife was amused and curious at first, but she soon began to dislike Westmouth. She knew very little English and felt out of things. She could not accustom herself to living so far from the children, and, above all, she was unhappy away from her beloved France. It was while observing her behaviour that I came to understand to what extent patriotism even with people who are not very conscious of it and scarcely ever speak of it, is a deep physical emotion. In America, Suzanne was literally ill, because she lacked that indefinable nourishment which French surroundings alone could give her.

Mrs. Spencer, distressed by her low spirits, was affectionately attentive, but to no purpose. In vain did the most sympathetic of the faculty wives try to interest themselves in the rue de Fontenelle — my wife bitterly resented her exile. Everything in America was absurd. A hundred insignificant differences which were merely picturesque seemed outrageous to her. She enjoyed exaggerating the odd things about Westmouth and refused to admire its virtues. She was unhappy and, consequently, unjust.

My faults were similarly condemned. During this difficult period I ought to have been the one to establish some sort of balance and poise, but I was

impatient with Suzanne. I did not feel at all as she did about Westmouth; I liked its appearance and its atmosphere. I was not less fond of the French way of living than she, but I felt that this agreeable interlude would help me to enjoy it all the more when I returned to Caen. My English, at one time good, had come back to me rather quickly, and the conversation of my colleagues – all cultured men in their varied fields – was a constant spiritual enrichment. My contentment at Westmouth was perhaps chiefly due – I must confess it – to a feeling of pride in the fact that my lectures were very popular; there was a daily increasing attendance of students, whose curiosity and enthusiasm delighted me. A few young women had succeeded in gaining admission and several of them were quite attractive, so that to my pleasure as a popular professor was added this flattery to my vanity as a man.

Because of all this, Suzanne's complaining made me angry. President Spencer had already offered to write to the Ministry to ask for an extension of my leave of absence and had told me he wanted to keep me at Westmouth for a whole year. Suzanne was loud in her protests and lost her temper. When she persisted in making perfectly clear to my American friends her desire to get back to Caen as quickly as

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

possible, I reproached her for her lack of tact and politeness, then she burst into tears. We made it up later, as do all young people who are true to one another, but sensuality does not take the place of esteem and affection, and I experienced with dismay a feeling of detachment and lassitude which I could not always manage to conceal. Several weeks went by, during which there were frequent quarrels and reconciliations.

One evening at about six o'clock, some two months after our arrival at Westmouth, I dropped in at Hickey's house and found him alone. After some casual conversation he suddenly spoke of his invention.

'Do you remember my thought-reading machine, Dumoulin?'

'What a question!' I exclaimed. 'I have not spoken of it lately, merely because I was afraid of bothering you, but I've often wondered if you've tried it on anyone else.'

'Yes,' he said, 'several times. The apparatus I used in your case had one great fault with it; the person whose "thought-stream" was to be studied had to sit in a special chair, and that was only possible in exceptional circumstances; no one but a physicist or a doctor could arrange such a compli-

cated series of microphones, wires, and recording discs. For the invention to be practical and universally usable, for it to become a part of our daily life, a simpler form had to be worked out, and I've solved this problem. Thanks to little Darnley, my ingenious assistant, I've now got an instrument, still somewhat complicated, but quite easy to carry about.'

'I am very curious to see it.'

'You are looking at it now,' he said.

'I don't see anything.'

'On the table beside your chair - a rather thick roll of paper.'

'I see that, of course - it's a copy of *Fortune* or *Esquire*.'

'That's what it looks like. Unroll it.'

I took the roll in my hands; it was the front cover of a magazine, reinforced with cardboard, and I found inside a strangely shaped and very heavy object. Out of its covering, it looked like an old-fashioned pistol; the stock was a large one and the wide barrel took up almost the whole length of the cardboard cylinder.

'What a strange instrument! Is this the blunderbuss you use now for your recordings?'

'Yes,' he said. 'Inside the stock of the blunder-

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

buss, as you call it, there is a cylinder which revolves by clockwork and upon which is rolled a very narrow film. The inner surface of the barrel is, as you can see, not polished, but set with specially curved mirrors. It collects the sound waves from a given point and directs them towards the cylinder. These vibrations pass through a photo-electric chamber and are recorded on the film. When the film is developed all I have to do is to reverse the operation, and, as in the case of the modern talking picture, produce sound recorded from the recorded film. As a matter of fact, it is rather complicated and I'm working now on an arrangement of filtering tubes that will eliminate superfluous noise . . . there you have the principle of the thing. Amusing, isn't it?"

I examined the heavy pistol rather apprehensively.

'I should think outside noises would seriously interfere,' I said.

'I'm trying to eliminate them, but you must admit that there is a minimum of that sort of disturbance at Westmouth. Listen . . . there's literally not a sound.'

'It's true,' I said, after a moment of silence. 'Has this unobtrusive instrument recorded my thoughts again this evening?'

'No, no - don't worry. I have not set the clock-

work going. Look. Here is the key. If you were to wind it all the way, the instrument would be ready for six hours' recording.'

Almost unconsciously I turned the key until it would go no farther.

'Now,' said Hickey, 'in order to set the recording cylinder in motion, you must press the white button on the right-hand side of the stock. To stop it, press the red button. There are holes in the cardboard, over these buttons, by means of which you can start and stop it without taking it out of its cover. When the film is used up, a red line appears at this little opening. It's very simple to operate.'

'And it really works?'

'For an instrument that has just been invented, it works rather well. If you'd like to try it, I'll lend you this one. Darnley has made up three of them for me.'

'What on earth should I do with it?'

'Who knows? Isn't it useful sometimes for a husband to know his wife's thoughts, for a father to know his children's, for a professor to know those of his pupils?'

'Useful? Or dangerous? In any case I haven't got the necessary mechanism for reproducing the sounds recorded on the film.'

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

'Oh, I'll help you there, Dumoulin. Seriously, take the thing with you, but don't show it to anyone. Should you want to use it, the best position is for the opening of the barrel to be about three feet from the mouth of your subject.'

He carefully replaced the blunderbuss in its cardboard tube and put a piece of string round it in order to give it an inoffensive appearance. We talked for a moment of university affairs, and, when I got up to go, Hickey put the instrument into my hands as a matter of course. Without further discussion I took the heavy cylinder under my arm and departed.

S U Z A N N E

WHILE crossing the narrow strip of lawn that lay between our house and Hickey's I considered what to say to Suzanne. Ought I to show her the strange instrument that I was carrying, explain its mechanism, and try it with her? Or ought I to say nothing and negligently place the treacherous parcel where it could record her most secret thoughts? I admit that I was tempted for a moment to commit this 'mental thievery'; then the dishonesty of such a proceeding struck me. Would I have opened a letter written by Suzanne but not addressed to me? Certainly not. 'It's the same thing,' I thought, as I turned the knob of the front door; I decided to tell her everything.

Our decisions, however, are easily changed by circumstances, and it happened that Suzanne was in a very bad mood that evening.

'How late you are!' she said, crossly. 'I was worried about you.'

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

'There wasn't the slightest reason to be worried,' I said, placing the cardboard roll on the little table beside her. 'I stopped at Hickey's on the way home from my lecture and we've been chatting for an hour. You see how innocent my absence was.'

'Perhaps, but how was I to know that? And what possible pleasure could you have in talking to that Englishman? He's a frightful bore.'

'Suzanne, how can you form an opinion so thoughtlessly of a great scholar like Hickey? You understand neither his language nor his ideas. He seems to me infinitely more interesting than your sister, Marie-Claude, when she explains for the hundredth time why her children are always having colds, or your brother-in-law, Maxime, when he is telling his war experiences.'

'You might have the kindness,' she said, 'not to remind me of the rue de Fontenelle when I am, alas! six thousand kilometres away from it. I'm only too likely to become neurasthenic in this country.'

'Neurasthenia is a convenient word,' I said, shrugging my shoulders.

Dinner was announced, and as I followed Suzanne to the dining-room I reproached myself for my impatience with her. For several weeks past these quarrels had frequently occurred. I would enter the

SUZANNE

house, full of sympathy for my exiled wife and determined to take a fatherly sympathetic attitude with her. I would imagine myself behaving thenceforth agreeably and generously. But the moment we were together, some ill-judged remark caused her bad temper to flame up. Five minutes later a bitter and useless argument was in full swing. 'This evening,' I thought, 'I will cut her short and not lose my temper.' But Suzanne was not to be stopped so easily, once she had got under way. She was a veritable Pythia, quickened by internal fires. As we sat down to our iced melon, she began on the hateful theme of the rue de Fontenelle; a letter, received that morning, had brought news of the slight illness of M. Cauvin-Lequeux.

'Do you understand now,' she said, 'why it is so dangerous for papa to be at the mercy of Jerome and Henriette with me separated from him – an ocean between us, and all your fault? How can I defend my rights? That's why I've always hated the idea of this trip to America.'

'Dear Suzanne, I don't want to reopen a painful discussion, but you must remember that, when President Spencer first came to Caen, you were in favour of my accepting his offer. And I've begged you a hundred times to forget all those family

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

troubles, at least for a few weeks. You can't stop Jerome and Henriette from wanting your father's farms, nor can I. Your endless talk about it will accomplish nothing. So, for heaven's sake, let's discuss something else. You make it all so boring. We're living in the youngest country in the world – in a vastly interesting part of it. It's all new to us, and yet you insist every evening upon our hashing over questions of property in Upper Normandy. Well, I won't do it any longer. There's something mean and shabby and unendurable about the whole business. I love you very much, but all this suffocates me. Won't you try to be more open-minded?"

"To men like you," she replied, angrily, "open-mindedness means something that satisfies *their* egoism. Naturally, you are delighted to be in this country. First, because you are really a heartless person, and once you left the children and our family and friends you forgot their existence; then, because people flatter you here, because fools like Muriel Wilson treat you as though you were a great man.'

"Her name is Wilton, not Wilson," I said, "and if she comes to my lectures . . ."

"Is it because she admires Balzac, *Le Curé de Tours* and *Le Lys dans la vallée*?" No, Denis, and

S U Z A N N E

you know it as well as I do And please understand that it's nothing to me if you want to flirt with these empty-headed little Americans; but I beg of you not to come preaching to me about open-mindedness. As for the property in Upper Normandy of which you speak so scornfully, you'll be delighted to take shelter in the rue de Fontenelle in your old age, if I can save the house from Jerome's depredations.'

I realized there was nothing for it but to wait until she had finished, and, while doing so, some demon possessed me. Suzanne, as was her invariable custom after dining, sat in her usual chair in the drawing-room, and I walked casually to the table beside it, where Hickey's instrument lay, for the ostensible purpose of setting down my coffee-cup. I put my finger through the hole in the cardboard covering and started the mechanism going. For a moment I thought Suzanne saw me do it; she raised her eyes from a book she had begun to read.

'Whose magazines are those?' she asked in a careless tone which I thought she had assumed; but I was mistaken.

'What magazines? . . . Oh, they're some that Hickey lent me.'

I noticed with relief that the instrument was

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

turned towards Suzanne, and at the correct distance from her mouth. I sat down opposite her and opened a volume of Balzac, pretending to take some notes and observing her carefully. She was reading *Lucienne*, a book which I liked and had recommended to her, but her attention seemed to wander; now and then she put down the book and gazed into space. She opened her mouth several times as though to speak, but, seeing me absorbed and inaccessible, she sighed gently and took up her book again. At about ten o'clock she rose from her chair.

'I'm tired,' she said. 'I think I'll go to bed.'

'I'll finish my chapter and follow you in a few moments.'

When Suzanne had left the room I took the blunderbuss from its holster, pressed the red button, and locked it in my private drawer. Then I went upstairs to her with a certain feeling of guilt and apprehension.

The next day I waited impatiently for Hickey to finish his lecture and his laboratory work, so that I could see him at his house. When the time came I had the ill luck to find Darnley, his assistant, with him. I hesitated to say before him that I had brought a recorded film which I wanted to hear, but Hickey understood at once what was in my mind and

himself broached the subject that was causing my embarrassment.

'My dear Dumoulin,' he said, 'you can speak freely before Darnley, not only because he is my assistant, but because his help will be more acceptable than mine for the translation into sound of the psychogram you've brought with you - yes, that's the word I use for these recordings. Darnley will take you to the basement, where I've installed a special talking-machine; he will run it for you. There's no reason for anxiety; I am purposely sending Darnley instead of going myself. I presume the film you've brought is in French?'

'Yes, naturally.'

'Well, Darnley doesn't understand a word, whereas I do know simple phrases. So you see it's better for him to take you. I'll see you later. Come to my study on your way out.'

Little Darnley took the instrument and I followed him into the basement. He explained to me that the film was developed by passing through a series of trays of acid and drying chambers and that it then went directly into the sound projector. Darnley was a good-humoured and exceedingly friendly young man, but this did not prevent me from feeling guilty and regretting what I was about to do. I had a rather

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

long wait while he got things ready; I glanced at my watch – it was already past six. Suzanne would complain again of my lateness. Poor Suzanne! And I was preparing to betray her!

‘Ready?’ Darnley suddenly asked

I told him I was ready, whereupon I heard the familiar buzzing noise of a projector; then a thin voice, accompanied by faint but regular sounds which I recognized to be those caused by breathing. The voice was not exactly Suzanne’s, but it resembled hers, nevertheless. What she said was difficult to understand and I did not realize at first that phrases from the book she had been reading were mingled with her thoughts.

In this narrative I am anxious not to quote long fragments of psychograms, for they are almost always monotonous, rather boring, and in any case familiar to all who have possessed psychographs – in other words, to the majority of my readers.

I will, however, quote a part of the one about which I am now writing, because it was my first experience and because I wish to account for my astonishment and my perplexity; in order to clarify it, I will italicize the phrases from the book which Suzanne held in her lap at the time.

' . I was in front of the station at twenty minutes past five Denis is really too conceited. *I was in front of the station at twenty minutes past five*, it was frightful having to get up at five in the morning on the boat, the noise of footsteps on the deck; I was so tired and the bath water slopped first one way and then the other. it made me sick at my stomach. When we get back to France, I ll never set foot on a boat again, two months more. maybe six, if he accepts, I don't know whether I can stand it. Denis is pleased because people praise him; he likes that; he's really a vain man and naive too. There's nothing for me here. these American men don't know how to talk to a woman; they re so serious and so timid; in France, men have more courage . . . it was amusing when Denis's friend – what was his name? Couzanne? – when Couzanne leaned over Jacques' cradle and whispered in my ear, "I wish I had given him to you"; I was furious, but rather excited by him, and I said. "Be careful Denis might hear!" *I was in front of the station at twenty minutes past five, and I realized that I had forgotten to ask Marie Lemieux how to get there; all I knew was that their house was somewhere behind the station; house, house, house, rue de Fontenelle; it was very unwise of me to leave; if Henriette and Jerome are hard up, they'll*

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

get papa to mortgage the rue de Fontenelle and the money will go just as quickly as the money from the Martot farm went; that awful Jerome, if I could only make him quarrel with papa; I must talk it over with Adrien; *I was in front of the station at twenty minutes past five.* Adrien, theatres, love, Adrien's advice is excellent for everything about Rouen and he is a business man; it's useless to talk to Denis about all that because he thinks Jerome is honest; he's honest, all right, that one! I respect Denis, but he really doesn't understand anything; he never thinks anyone is dishonest and he admires Henriette because she is beautiful, as if that were a reason; I hate Henriette; I used to like to scratch her when I was little, because she was prettier than I was, and now I've got three grey hairs; I'm getting old – how quickly that happens! *I was in front of the station at twenty minutes past five,* Heavens, how boring it is here – so still, I loved the noises of the Saint-Romain Fair at Rouen; the merry-go-round organs, the riding-school in the Place Beauvoisine, the Bidet Zoo – it was all so gay. Adrien used to ride with me on the merry-go-round in one of those little cars; they turned so fast that he was thrown against me, and I loved it; and the people standing in front of the shops; the clicking of the lottery turnstiles;

S U Z A N N E

the nougat-sticks; the caramels, *I realized that I had forgotten to ask Marie Lemieux how to get there;* Adrien used to put his arm round my waist when we were in a crowd and I loved that; perhaps I would really have been happier if I had married Adrien. Denis is all right, but he understands nothing about anything, and Adrien is very successful. he's a ship-broker; he makes two hundred thousand francs a year and Louise is much better dressed than I am; she has no troubles like mine, and, anyhow, Adrien is gentle and pets her, Denis is rough and awkward. Adrien, theatre, love, blue coach, if I'm not careful the furniture will be gone, too, Denis doesn't care, but I'm fond of that Louis XIV chest and the old table; *all I knew was that their house was somewhere behind the station. . . .*

It would be boring and useless to quote more of this incoherent recording, which went on for more than an hour. The stream of 'interior language' was interrupted by short silences and long fragments of the book. The main themes of Suzanne's protracted meditation were those with which the passage already quoted has familiarized the reader: a grave anxiety¹ lest M. Cauvin-Lequeux be cheated by his son-in-law, a secret and unsatisfied sensuality,

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

and a youthful love for her cousin, Adrien Lequeux. This last infuriated me, for I knew Adrien; he was a man of forty with a definite paunch; he was a woman-chaser, rather foppish, insignificant, and given to pontificating. He always made me think of Joseph Prudhomme or Cesar Birotteau, rather than Don Juan or Rastignac. Undoubtedly I had no justification for thinking that Suzanne was in love with him, but there was enough in the long psychogram to prove that there had been a youthful flirtation to which she attached great importance and remembered clearly, also that, in several business matters, she wanted this imbecile's advice instead of mine. At the time, all this appeared rather serious to me, and, fortunately, the darkness prevented Darnley from seeing how upset I was.

'Was it all right?' he asked, when the buzzing stopped.

'Yes, indeed,' I answered, with composure, 'and many thanks.'

But I managed, upon leaving that wretched basement, to get out of the house without meeting Hickey.

VII

ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

DESPITE the lateness of the hour when I left my neighbour's house, I did not have the courage to enter my own front door immediately. Before facing Suzanne, I needed to consider carefully all that I had just heard. I started to walk rapidly round our block, along pavements carpeted with dead leaves; the mild exercise and the fresh night air were calming to my spirit. My first intention had been to give my wife a well-deserved scolding; then followed a determination to say nothing whatever. 'What good could it do,' I asked myself, 'to confront Suzanne brutally with her secret thoughts? She would be justly angry with me for this intellectual burglary, and I would be at a disadvantage right at the start. Also, by declaring them thus openly, I would merely be strengthening the grievances she could obviously have against me. No, it would be far wiser, if I had the courage for it, to profit secretly by this lesson and win back my wife whom I loved,

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

after all, and who might be completely estranged from me if I were not careful. For this I would use Hickey's astonishing instrument and read Suzanne's further thoughts which she would continue to believe inviolate; and I could . . .'

At that moment I realized that I had left the psychograph in Hickey's subterranean laboratory. This was a bore, but not serious; it would be easy to get it the next day. But what was I to say to Hickey? Very little. It would be enough to thank him and add casually that the instrument had confirmed certain facts which were already known to me. Having mapped out a satisfactory attitude to take, I turned towards 302 Lincoln Avenue.

The household in which there are elements of discord is, alas! very like a discontented nation in vain do those who govern it expect to help it safely over difficulties by means of wise reforms; it remains despite their goodwill and their prudence, at the mercy of tiny incidents – a shot fired by a drunken sentry may, against everyone's will, bring on the inevitable revolution. The comparison is a grandiloquent one to use in describing an insignificant domestic quarrel; I merely wanted to point out that it is just as difficult to control a conversation as to handle a rioting population, and that a casual word

ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

may involve two people with over-sensitive nerves in a quarrel which neither of them desires

I arrived full of good intentions, to find Suzanne angrier than ever. She complained of my lateness, which was that evening, I must confess, somewhat alarming. She shrugged her shoulders when I told her that I had spent two hours with our neighbours, and she insinuated that Muriel Wilton had had something to do with it. My sincerity had been completely disregarded and I was furious; in five minutes, I forget now by what transition, I found myself telling her the very things I had decided to conceal.

‘Before we talk about Muriel Wilton,’ I said, ‘it might be chronologically advisable to say a few words about Adrien Lequeux.’

‘Adrien?’ she said, with admirably assumed indifference. ‘Adrien! Who cares about Adrien?’

‘You do – and very tenderly.’

‘Are you out of your mind?’ she cried, and Rosita, thinking she had been summoned, opened the dining-room door. ‘What can be the matter with you? I don’t care anything about Adrien. I haven’t even sent him a postcard since coming to America.’

‘Perhaps not, but you were thinking last night that his advice would be much better than mine.

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

You recalled with pleasure your visits with him to the Saint-Romain Fair and also certain gestures of his which, considering your youth, were, to say the least, improper.'

Suzanne was stupefied; for a moment there was a mingling of hate and terror in her eyes which shamed me, but at the same time gave me an extraordinary feeling of power.

'Last night? You say I was thinking all that?'

'Yes - last night while you were reading, or pretending to read. Can you swear to me that you were not thinking of your walks with Adrien, of your visits with him to the riding academy, and of a blue coach somewhere? Didn't you say to yourself that Adrien was gentle and affectionate, whereas I was awkward and brutal? Don't deny it, Suzanne - your face betrays you.'

She seemed to be overwhelmed, filled with confusion.

'But, Denis,' she asked, in a frightened voice, 'how did you know that? Did I think out loud?'

Perhaps I should have confirmed her in this unlikely explanation, but I was in no mood to proceed cautiously. I told her everything: of my surprise when Hickey had revealed my own thoughts to me, of the perilous chair, the new instrument, the pistol

ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

pointed at her, and finally the talking machine and the long boring record I had listened to by the light of a red lamp in the basement. She listened to me in silence, at first incredulously, then angrily.

‘What a shameful and disgusting thing!’

‘But, Suzanne . . .’

‘Disgusting!’ You lectured me for an hour the other evening on the qualities of an English gentleman. What do you think of your behaviour last night? You not only violated my thoughts, thus robbing me of the one poor little bit of liberty I have left in this miserable country, which is to dream of home, but you turned over my secrets to strangers who are probably making fun of me at this moment’

‘Don’t be absurd, Suzanne. Darnley doesn’t know any French and Hickey wasn’t there.’

‘How do you know he wasn’t hiding somewhere?’

‘Oh, Suzanne – Hickey is a gentleman, after all!’

‘I beg you not to use that ridiculous word again . . . and where is this film now? Did you bring it back with you?’

‘The film? Good God . . .’

I remembered that I had left it beside the psychograph on the laboratory table. Being in the wrong now, I attacked.

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

'Suzanne,' I said, 'your stupidity is unbelievable! I have discovered, in a way that is perhaps not very commendable, but exceedingly precise, certain facts that are obviously true – facts that you were hiding from me without the right to do so. Now you are angry with *me*, and it's really too much.'

'But I have nothing to conceal. What harm is there in . . .'

' . . . in dreaming of Adrien Lequeux's caresses?' I asked, dryly.

She burst out laughing.

'Really, men are too absurd! I flirted with Adrien when I was fifteen or sixteen. That was fourteen years ago. I have two children; he has three. I never think of him and I don't see what I have done that is wrong.'

'How can you say you never think of him, when I have just proved . . .'

'You have proved nothing. In spite of this impossible experiment, I repeat that I never think of Adrien. It happened last night that his name came into my mind because his advice would be excellent in a matter of selling some property. Again I ask you – is that a crime?'

'It would not be a crime if you thought of him merely as an adviser, but your desire for his counsels

ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

was mingled with memories of an unusually intimate kind.'

'Unusually intimate?' she exclaimed. 'Why unusually intimate? Adrien was my cousin, and he was the only young man my mother would allow me to go out alone with. He flirted with me; all young men flirt with young women. Afterwards, what? Were you a saint yourself? Don't you remember your own youth? Can you swear that you have no similar memories of young women you have not seen since, and whom you do not in the least want to see?'

'Perhaps I have, but . . .'

Then I stopped. Suzanne had just gained a tactical advantage by putting me on the defensive. The tone of our discussion grew less violent, and, thanks to one of those curious reactions which often take place with married couples who believe that scenes can clear the atmosphere, our quarrel soon evaporated.

'Darling,' I said, 'I agree with you so absolutely and am so far from criticizing you for your day-dreaming which was involuntary and retrospective, that I had decided never to mention it to you. But you were so cross with me that I lost my temper. It's all over now; I realize that the incident is unimportant. I know that Adrien is no more to you

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

than a rather comic member of your family and that you like to evoke memories of your childhood with him.'

'I don't even like doing that,' said Suzanne

'I believe you, dear; my only complaint, and I make it in all tenderness, is that you seem to have lost confidence in me. That long meditation of yours, which I no longer take seriously, showed me that you are worrying about all sorts of things. Why don't you talk them over with me? Why not confide in me?'

'But you're so aloof, Denis. You never listen when I say things to you that are really interesting; you're always thinking about your lectures, or your pupils, or politics. You seem bored, so I keep my wretched woman's thoughts to myself.'

'Suzanne, come and sit on my lap as you used to do, and tell me what's on your mind.'

'Oh, no, Denis; don't let's be silly. I'm thirty, after all, and much too heavy.'

That night in bed Suzanne put her head on my shoulder and we had a long intimate conversation. As we talked, the wall of reserve which had raised itself between us was demolished, and I gave thanks for the existence of the psychograph. But I was not to feel this way for long.

MURIEL WILTON

IN our early Westmouth days we knew no one but President and Mrs. Spencer, Dean Phillips and his wife, the Macphersons, the Hickeys, and a few other local celebrities. Except for Hickey, the gods who graced that Olympus were venerable beings whose behaviour was a little out of date and whose verbal prudery astonished us. For a few weeks these simple, kindly people greatly amused us; they made me think of some of the most moving of Balzac's and Dickens's characters. A little later, we found that some of the young professors lived very different lives.

In 1925 in these circles, radicalism, of the sort then prevalent in America and England, was indulged in. One read Hemingway, Faulkner, and Dos Passos, instead of Emerson, Hawthorne, and Oliver Wendell Holmes; vacations were spent not at Vézelay or Bath, as were those of the Spencers, but at Moscow or Tiflis; and though the older generation strictly observed prohibition and ice-

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

water was the only drink to be had at even the most formal of Lakeside dinners, the rebel clan gave secret cocktail parties.

It must be added, for the sake of exactness, first that this group was very small; then that conformity was the prevailing attitude at Westmouth, if only out of regard for one's career; and finally that the insurgents suffered cruelly for their rebelliousness. How often at these harmless gatherings did I imagine I could hear the rattle of broken chains dragging at their ankles and hanging from their lacerated necks. They were aware of their inherited puritanism, and the most brilliant of them, a young philosopher named Clinton, talked to me several times very freely.

"Why do we violate the law of prohibition?" he said, replying to one of my questions. "I assure you I dislike doing it intensely. You are French; a realist; accustomed to accepting the things of the flesh and to regarding sin as an almost inevitable accident; you cannot conceive how we sons of Pilgrims feel about this. We talk of it like learned men, like psychologists, with apparent cynicism, but something within us protests and the resulting conflict produces physical disturbances. Alcohol comes to our rescue; yes, it delivers us for a few hours from

the enslavement of our Puritan conscience. Five or six cocktails can silence those unendurable Quaker ancestors who hold their pious gatherings in our very brain cells. It is a terrible thing to say, but it is only when mildly intoxicated that I can make love, that I can live – or try to – for the respite is never very long. The poison is soon eliminated, the Pilgrims stir themselves and remorse begins. You don't appreciate your blessings, Dumoulin.'

It was my intimacy with Clinton that occasionally impelled us to join the little clan which called itself The Hell Fire Club in imitation of a certain group of rakes in the eighteenth century in England. We ought not to have appeared at these parties, for President Spencer would have been deeply shocked at such imprudence, but the hell in question was tepid and most respectable. Suzanne and I poured our cocktails into flower-vases or out of a window if there was one opened, and sometimes we simply put down our glasses and pretended to forget them. We were thus perfectly sober and could enjoy our odd surroundings; the early stages of intoxication at parties like this always produced brilliant conversation.

Several of the young women who attended them attracted me very much. They were delightful to

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

look at and one or two of them were extremely clever, possessing a most original sense of humour which the freshness and richness of the American language rendered quite irresistible to me. It did not occur to me, however, to flirt with them; they were my colleagues' wives, and I felt that my position as a visiting professor imposed certain restrictions on my conduct. In any case I am a rather diffident person, so that, despite their freedom of speech and action, these charming women remained properly impersonal.

The only exception was Muriel Wilton, whom I have already mentioned and whose presence at my lectures had occasioned Suzanne's ill-tempered comment. She was not the wife of a professor, but had recently got her divorce from a Chicago manufacturer. She was spending several months with her mother, the widow of one of Westmouth's notables, and she had obtained permission to attend my lectures through her brother, who was one of the university's most generous alumni and a member of its board of trustees. I do not see how one could have helped admiring her. When she came to my reading-desk to ask some questions concerning the day's lecture, I confess that I was moved and flattered to have been able to interest,

MURIEL WILTON

if indirectly, such a lovely and charming woman.

My meetings with Muriel Wilton in 'Higgins 65,' under the vigilant eyes of fifty students and several of my fellow professors, were quite innocent, and the situation did not become serious for me until the evening when I encountered her at a party given by Clinton. In my special honour, Clinton had got from his bootlegger some French wine which, to my great surprise, turned out to be excellent. M. Cauvin-Lequeux himself would have appreciated an unforgettable Haut-Brion and a Vosnes-Romanée worthy to be celebrated by my poor colleague, Albert Thibaudet. The intoxication produced by wine is more delicate and more eloquent than that resulting from cocktails, and the Puritans unbent. I myself, who am not, as I have said, accustomed to extensive drinking, could not dispose of wine from my own country as I had unscrupulously done with those other insidious mixtures of questionable alcohol, so that by two o'clock in the morning I was very gay and had but little control of myself.

How did the party end? I am unable to say. I believe, though I could not swear it, that I took refuge in Clinton's library with Muriel Wilton, that she lay on the couch, and that very little

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

happened. My only exact memories are that I returned to Lincoln Avenue on foot with Suzanne, that I enjoyed breathing in the sharp cold night air, that I took her arm affectionately as we walked along (she seemed irritated and soon shook her arm free from my grasp), and finally that the hall clock struck four as I climbed the staircase.

CHAPTER IX

SUZANNE STRIKES BACK

DESPITE my few hours of sleep on the night of the 'debauch', I arose at my usual time without feeling any fatigue. Indeed, on the contrary, I was conscious of that curious intellectual elation of a man who believes he has made a conquest, and I knew immediately that my lecture that morning would be unusually brilliant. I was obliged to leave the house for 'Higgins 65' at ten o'clock without saying good-bye to Suzanne, who was still asleep, and I left a note reminding her that it was my day for lunching at the club with my colleagues in the romance language department.

As I had hoped and expected, my lecture on Balzac's politics was a good one. In order to capture my young Americans' interest, I had had to sketch in a wide canvas depicting the France which had been moulded and influenced by the old monarchies, the Revolution, and the Empire; then I placed Balzac in my picture, pointing out the special nature of his Royalism and his Catholicism. For this

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

purpose I made use of *Les Chouns*, *Une Ténébreuse Affaire*, *Le Curé de village*, *Le Médecin de campagne* and *Les Employés*. Having been at pains to express these French problems in terms that could be understood by my pupils, I was delighted, as any professor would be, to notice keen and passionate interest on every face during the whole hour. When I finished speaking, fifty voices buzzed enthusiastically, and I could hear such remarks as 'Wasn't that a swell lecture?' On days like this, I felt that my profession was the noblest of them all. I sometimes cursed it, but those days were rare.

My only regret that morning was to discover that Muriel Wilton was not in her accustomed seat. But how could she have come to the lecture-hall? At four o'clock she had shown no signs of wanting to leave the Clintons, and, having gone to bed at dawn, was now undoubtedly asleep. I attended a faculty meeting in Macpherson's study, and went on later to lunch with the romance language professors. We talked of the coming retirement of President Spencer, who would soon be seventy, and of the unanimous desire of the faculty that he might be succeeded by Dean Phillips, a man greatly beloved for his integrity, and a fine mathematician. After lunch I went for a long walk with

SUZANNE STRIKES BACK

Clinton and returned to Lincoln Avenue, happy at the prospect of telling Suzanne of the success of my lecture.

I was astonished to discover that she was not at home, Rosita told me that 'Mme Dumoulin' had gone out at one o'clock. Scarcely ever did she leave the house alone, for her unfamiliarity with English required my presence if she wanted to do any shopping, and if she had calls to make, I was obliged by local custom to accompany her. But her absence was not at all disquieting; nothing unpleasant ever happened at Westmouth. I had been asked to deliver a series of lectures on the French moralists in Chicago the following month, and I was soon at work on it.

Suzanne came in at five o'clock, and I realized immediately that she was in an execrable frame of mind. I put this down to our excesses of the previous night and attempted to laugh her out of it.

'Come, darling, it's all because we can't keep pace with these young foreigners; we're of good old French bourgeois stock, domesticated, early-to-bed, and loaded with family responsibilities. Parties like that one are bad for our morale and for our work, though I must say that my lecture on Balzac's

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

politics went very well. My students seemed very much pleased . '

'And was Muriel Wilton pleased with you?' she asked, sarcastically.

'Muriel Wilton was not there, Suzanne. I suppose she also was recovering from a night without enough sleep. That sort of pleasure really does no one any good. Man is not a nocturnal animal, and the longer I live the more I am convinced that early rising and early retiring are both necessary to our happiness.'

'Do you take me for your Chicago audience?' asked Suzanne, in strangely caustic tones. 'You are under no obligation, I assure you, to enunciate platitudes and comment on your precious moralists in this house.'

I have already said that my wife and I had frequent insignificant quarrels, but she had rarely spoken to me in this scornfully hostile manner. I looked at her in astonishment.

'To me it seems ridiculous,' she said, taking off her hat, 'that you should be asked to lecture on morals and talk in the language of a wise man - oh, you do it very well - of moderation and the control of our passions, when you will actually be thinking only of Mrs. Muriel Wilton and how you are going to meet her in Chicago.'

SUZANNE STRIKES BACK

'I? Meet Muriel Wilton in Chicago? Are you out of your senses?'

At that moment a horrible and only too probable thing crossed my mind.

'Suzanne! Did you borrow that stupid machine from Hickey?'

'Why not? You did yourself. You left it there so I went to get it. I asked Professor Hickey to show me how to make it work and to give me a new film.'

'And he did what you asked? Just wait till I tell him what I think of him!'

Suzanne laughed harshly

'Men are really wonderful! As long as *my* secrets were to be disclosed, *my* private thoughts violated, it was an entirely natural proceeding and a most interesting experiment – you and Hickey behaved like perfect gentlemen. But when a woman enters the holy – as a matter of fact, beastly – precincts of a man's mind, it is the most abominable crime. Don't you see how comic you are – how comic you both are?'

I realized that my position was becoming impossible to defend and I tried to keep calm.

'It's no good shouting at me, Suzanne,' I said, quietly. 'Please tell me exactly what you did.'

THE ~~THOUGHT~~-READING MACHINE

What did you hear and what have you to reproach me with? I will answer all your questions to the best of my ability.'

'I don't want any questions answered,' she said. 'I've heard all I need to hear and it was much more truthful than anything you would say now. You ask what I did; it was very simple. I went yesterday to Mr. Hickey and asked him to give me the -- what do you call it? -- the psychograph. I brought it back here. Naturally I did not use those rolled up magazines which you would have recognized. I know how absent-minded you are and how little you notice anything that is not a book, so I wrapped it in one of my petticoats and put in on the table near your bed. When we got home from that dreadful party, I went quickly upstairs while you were hanging up your coat and hat and pressed the button to start it going. You followed me, you got into bed, and then you thought.'

'And what did I think? I give you my word, I haven't the faintest idea.'

'And I give you mine that I will remember what you thought for the rest of my life. It was about that woman. You said to yourself: "She evidently liked me." Oh, you're so conceited! It wasn't you she liked, but your wretched little gift for speaking.

SUZANNE STRIKES BACK

You murmured: "That kiss!" and in what a voice! Then you made some plans for your trip to Chicago; you considered asking her to go there at the same time, and contemplated sending me back to France. You said "It really doesn't suit Suzanne here at all; she would be much better off if she returned to Rouen and I could join her there in three months." Even privately you're a hypocrite and full of moral phrases! But the most comic thing, or the most tragic if you like, was the mingling in all this of some highly virtuous reflections on Vauvenargues and Pascal, and other parts of your work on the Chicago lectures. How ridiculous the contents of a man's mind can be!

I was stunned, and all the more so because I now remembered the meditation she had heard. I was very tired when I returned from the party and was under the impression that I had gone to sleep at once. But I now remembered a confused musing, made up of vague desires and a crazy scheme for my Chicago trip which included a meeting there with Muriel. I had never for a moment taken this seriously. A dream is sometimes the imaginary realization of a subconscious desire, and it was by some such process that my musing had given to the emotions of the evening an unreal

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

and flattering conclusion. But for that damnable instrument, there would have been none of it left in my mind – not even the wish that it might come true.

‘But Suzanne, how did you hear the film?’

‘Your friend Hickey took me down into his laboratory himself and ran the talking machine for me.’

‘Did he listen to it?’

‘Every word. I was horribly embarrassed, but it was your fault and not mine.’

‘Suzanne! This is awful! What will Hickey think of me now?’

‘That remark sums you up absolutely. You wonder what Hickey’s opinion may be before giving a thought to mine, but I’m going to tell you mine just the same. It is that you love me no longer; that you want to get rid of me; and in view of this I think it would be better for us to live apart. You hoped I might return to France, and that is exactly what I intend to do. When I get there I will arrange for our separation.’

‘Don’t say insane things that you will be sorry for, Suzanne,’ I said, with such sincere emotion that she seemed to be affected by it. ‘You know perfectly well that I love you and that you love me.

SUZANNE STRIKES BACK

What you discovered in my mind were fugitive thoughts, as were those I discovered in yours, the other evening; they had no depth or reality. I could leave this country with you to-morrow and never see Muriel Wilton again, without caring in the least.'

'I gather that is not what you tell her when you kiss her'

'But I don't kiss her, Suzanne, any more than you hope to become the mistress of Adrien Lequeux. We're dreaming, and perhaps we dream all the more because, in our waking moments, we are sensible people and faithful to one another.'

'Is that true?' she asked with a passionate intensity that she had not shown since the time of our betrothal. 'Is it true? Are you faithful to me? Have you always been faithful to me?'

'Always, Suzanne. How could I have been otherwise. At Caen I am always . . .'

'Weren't you ever . . . weren't you ever in love with Henriette?'

'Your sister? Why? Did I talk about her in my . . . confession?'

'No, not a word . . . It's only that I've sometimes been afraid you were.'

'What insanity, Suzanne! I think she is beautiful, in the same way that I think a work of art is

THE THOUGHT READING MACHINE

beautiful. If you could only realize that I love no one but you, even when I hate you '

She said nothing, and I sat on the floor at her feet, putting my head on her knees. She let it rest there.

CHAPTER X

THE INVENTOR IS BLAMED

I AM anxious to make it clear at once that the psychograph did not wreck our happiness. Very much the reverse. The scene I have just described was followed, as was its predecessor, by an affectionate reconciliation. It was a great relief to both of us to know that there were now no secret thoughts that could cause trouble between us. In the minds of most people like ourselves certain unspoken things are always present, and they can have serious consequences. In our case the psychograph had cleared away all the dangerous encumbrances. In the emotion of those first moments we swore to one another never to touch the wretched instrument again; a little later, we concluded that this precaution was excessive and agreed to make use of it from time to time, but only with the full consent of the one whose thoughts were to be recorded.

In this way we found that it was possible, by means of an effort of the will, to control our thought-streams, and that this power could be

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

developed appreciably. At first, even when warned, I found myself in about fifteen minutes indulging in uncontrolled reveries, but I was able little by little to reduce the extent of these wanderings. I even invented a sort of psychographic rosary that I could say over rapidly whenever I discovered my thoughts taking dangerous turns. This experiment threw fresh light upon certain rites prescribed by the Catholic Church and greatly increased my respect for its profound wisdom. Barring several unfortunate occurrences and considering the question over a number of years, I can honestly say that the effect of the psychograph upon us was excellent.

But I must not allow the personal element to interfere with this narrative which I am anxious to set down clearly and dispassionately. Let me go back, therefore, to the day following the Muriel Wilton incident. It will be easily guessed that my first concern was to see Hickey. I was angry with him and, I thought, with good reason. He was undoubtedly, as Suzanne had declared, just as much to be blamed for allowing me to read my wife's thoughts as for making it possible for her to read mine. The second experiment had shown me, much more clearly than the first, how dangerous the perfected apparatus could be, and it seemed to

THE INVENTOR IS BLAMED

me that Hickey should have respected male solidarity and that our first conversations had established between us a tacit agreement which he had broken. In short, my feeling was that he had behaved badly to me, and I told him so quite frankly. My reproaches left him unmoved and smiling.

'I'm dreadfully sorry,' he said, 'to have caused you any annoyance, but you must admit that it was all rather unimportant.'

'I will admit nothing of the sort, Hickey, and it seems to me that you take very lightly a responsibility which might have turned out to be a very serious one. If my wife and I had not been an extremely united couple, you might have had a divorce on your hands. I don't see that you have any right to run such risks. Your invention is ingenious and you are a courageous researcher. You are a learned man. You have genius. Everyone is agreed on that score. But I have never believed in the divine right of genius. You could easily have made some less cruel experiments. Of course that is a moral problem which you must solve in your own way, but in my opinion no man has the right to meddle with the lives of his fellow beings, even in the name of science. Of course, my dear Hickey, if you were a doctor . . .'

'Oh, if I were a doctor,' he laughed, 'I would be experimenting unscrupulously with the poor devils in the hospitals, getting doubtful results and sometimes fatal ones. If I were a novelist, I would write about my friends and their experiences without regard for the effect that my books might have upon them; my unique concern would be that the books should be good ones. Didn't your Balzac make use of his mistress's confidences when creating his heroines? Come, Dumoulin, it's no good your being angry. After all, what actually happened? Have you fallen out with Mme Dumoulin?'

'Fallen out? Far from it. My wife was shocked by certain parts . . . by certain thoughts which you ascribed to me . . .'

' "Ascribed" is good.'

'But she has too much sense not to realize that they were part of a waking dream.'

'Then what,' he asked, 'have you to complain of?'

'Imagine what might have happened if our *ménage* had not been invulnerable, if my wife had been less reasonable, or if my confessions had been more precise. The experiment might have had disastrous results.'

'Obviously,' said Hickey. 'But in such a case as that, I would not have made the experiment. I

THE INVENTOR IS BLAMED

chose you and your wife as subjects purposely. I saw immediately that you and she were firmly united. There is a certain type of conjugal intimacy which an observer cannot mistake and there are many examples of this type in France. In your case I was convinced that the experiment could have no serious result, but I will tell you now that I insisted on being present when Mme Dumoulin listened to the recording, and that I had my hand on the lever so that I could stop the machine and tell her it had broken down if your words became too compromising. Fortunately, what your wife and I heard was relatively innocent.'

As may well be imagined, this last sentence relieved me greatly, for Suzanne had refused to tell me precisely what my reverie had been in detail.

'Is that really true, Hickey?' Tell me what you did hear, exactly.'

'My dear man,' he said, 'the film is still in my laboratory; you may listen to it if you like, and then destroy it.'

Hearing one's thoughts is a very strange experience, but it has now lost much of its novelty, owing to the wide use of the psychograph. Most people have heard their own interior language at least once. On that first occasion, however, the

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

amplified murmuring that was my own unspoken thought-stream produced a peculiarly uneasy sensation; but I was relieved to find that the monologue was actually much more innocent than certain other thoughts that had crossed my mind concerning Muriel Wilton. Obviously these reveries were not entirely verbal, and the other portions, occurring simultaneously, were composed of images without the accompaniment of sound articulation. Hickey's apparatus had, luckily for me, recorded no trace of these, and I refrained from mentioning the fact, for he would probably have applied himself to the complex problem of photographing cerebral images, and he would have solved it. This, I thought, would be of doubtful benefit to me and to humanity in general. When the film came to an end, I merely asked that it might be destroyed. He did this at once in my presence.

'And now,' I said, as we left the laboratory, 'though I bear you no malice, I think my wife and I have done all we need do for your researches, and I feel that your experiments would be of more value from now on if you were to get other subjects to work with.'

'I feel precisely as you do,' he said, offering me a cigarette, 'and if you will promise to be discreet I

THE INVENTOR IS BLAMED

will tell you of a very curious case that is now absorbing my attention; it is one that, if I am successful, will prove the usefulness of the psychograph far more conclusively than yours did.'

'Really? Do tell me about it.'

He hesitated for a moment.

'I'm not sure that I ought to, for it concerns a matter that is vital to the future of this university. But you are one of us; we are both members of the faculty. I need advice badly and the fact that you are both a professor and a foreigner may enable you to help me more competently and more impartially than anyone else. But I must ask you to remember that all I tell you is strictly confidential.'

'I promise to say nothing about it.'

'Even to your wife?'

'Unless you provide her again with the means to read my thoughts. . . .'

'In that case,' he said, 'I will explain the whole thing to you. You must make yourself comfortable, because it will take some time '

He pointed to a chair, which I could not help examining rather suspiciously, put cigarettes, a bottle of whisky, and a glass near me, and then began to talk. '

PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION

‘IN order to make it all perfectly clear, I will explain the situation as though it were completely unknown to you, and if I mention things of which you are already aware you must forgive me. It will be the best way of presenting all the data for your consideration. You know that Dr. Spencer intends to retire at the end of the present university year. This decision of his is final and has been taken for reasons of age and health; they are too legitimate even to be discussed. President and Mrs. Spencer are anxious to spend several more years peacefully in Europe among its works of art which they both greatly enjoy. Nothing could be more natural and the faculty must abide by their decision.

‘The president announced this decision, *urbi et orbi*, three months ago, and the appointment of his successor is going to be a matter of grave importance to the university. Though you have not been long in America, Dumoulin, you have seen enough of it to realize the dangers that threaten our higher

PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION

education It may be said in a general way that there are two tendencies, the first and the soundest is the one followed by the really cultivated men who, with European universities as their models, founded centres of learning such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Williams, Johns Hopkins, Cornell, Dartmouth, Columbia, and twenty others; the second is followed by educational charlatans who are backed by rich benefactors and offer what is nothing but a parody of higher education

'You have no idea to what degree of absurdity this evil can spread If you have the time, read Flexner's excellent book on the subject. Certain institutions go so far as to offer students who are studying for degrees similar to your *baccalauréat* and your *licence*, courses as ridiculous as "the principles of publicity", "the art of making ice-cream (elementary and advanced instruction)", "elementary pottery", and "first aid". You will find the complete list in Flexner's book - it is comic, but very alarming. Please understand that I have no objection to courses of this kind; they all have their value, but they should be in the curriculums of technological institutions, where they belong. It seems to me dangerous to offer such a confusion of diplomas and to give young Americans who are

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

already only too self-confident the idea that they are acquiring a broad culture when they are getting nothing of the sort.

'Here at Westmouth, you have no doubt discovered that, but for a few rare exceptions, the instruction is of a high order. I sincerely believe that my science students here are as well, if not better, equipped than most English ones, and you yourself have spoken of being pleasantly surprised by your young men's enthusiasm and their knowledge of French. This is due to twenty-five years of effort and to a gentle but unyielding firmness on the part of President Spencer. Rich alumni have often tried to get him to accept donations with impossible conditions attached, but he has always refused them. The trustees forced him to take old Scripps' money for a College of Commerce, but he made it a separate institution — and an excellent one at that — with its own diploma.

'Have you heard the absurd Kettlesh episode? No? Well — since we have plenty of time I'll tell you a bit about it, because the incident is symbolic. Kettlefish, an ingenious and poverty-stricken adventurer, caught a bird one day near Niagara Falls. It was of an unknown species, and its captor declared that it could talk, not merely in parrot-like imitation

PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION

of the human voice, but in a language which was original and peculiar to its kind. At the time of its capture, Kettlefish's bird, if we are to believe its master, could utter seventeen different sounds. Kettlefish compiled a dictionary and announced to an enchanted group of reporters that he was now ready to teach the language of birds.

'Up to that point the incident was merely Aristophanic, but Caius Mitchell, one of Westmouth's millionaire benefactors, read the newspaper report and sent for Kettlefish. It is not clear why this eighty-year-old distiller was so taken by the fake naturalist, but President Spencer received a letter from him the next day, offering one hundred thousand dollars for the creation of a chair of ornitho-phonetics, with Kettlefish as the first incumbent. What I'm telling you sounds like a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, but I swear that it's a true story. The president, as you may imagine, flatly refused the donation, but – can you believe it? – he was obliged to combat an indignant board of trustees who thought it unwise to annoy such a powerful man. Old Spencer stood his ground and we were saved from ridicule, but Mitchell had no difficulty in finding a less scrupulous seat of learning, and "Professor Kettlefish" is to-day – just where, I

cannot tell you – at the head of an ornitho-phonetic laboratory. I noticed the other day, on the front page of a most respectable newspaper, the following headline “Kettlefish’s Bird Contrives Its Nineteenth Sound”.’

‘It’s not possible!’ I exclaimed.

‘It’s true, nevertheless,’ said Hickey. ‘I’m telling you this merely to show you why, in universities which are not government-controlled, the choosing of a president is such a desperately serious matter. We are fortunate in having here at Westmouth the perfect type of the great American educator, and, as we both know, Dean Phillips is the man. A mathematician of great ability, a philosopher whom your Henri Poincaré once praised, a splendid administrator, and a man adored by students and professors alike, Phillips is the only man capable of taking Spencer’s place without gravely endangering the future of Westmouth.’

‘I believe everyone is agreed as to that,’ I said. ‘Ever since my arrival here, I have heard his candidature spoken of with approval.’

‘By all except one man. We have, alas! an undesirable candidate, as well as an ideal one; and this is where our conversation becomes confidential. Do you know Professor Windbag?’

PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION

'Very casually. I met him the day we returned his call. He seemed to me brilliant, unctuous, and mediocre.'

'Windbag is all three of those things; he's really a second-rate man. He teaches pedagogy, lecturing on the art of "measuring" the aptitude of a student or the ability of a professor. That's merely dressing an intellectual phantom in erudite garments. He has invented this formula to determine the personal equation of a student

$$X = \frac{(T^2 - T^2N)(1 - S^2)}{A + \frac{1}{P^1} + \frac{1}{P^2}}$$

T being the student's number of hours per week; N, the number of students in the group; S, I've forgotten what; A, the age of the student's parents; P¹, the length of the father's education, and P², the length of the mother's education.'

'Hickey, you're joking!'

'I would to God I were, but, alas! I'm not. This nonsense is seriously taught to future professors who then start to prepare, under the supervision of Professor Windbag, some sort of unbelievable thesis called "Housekeeping as a part of

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

the Higher Education of Young Women". Not only are these subjects taught, but they are highly approved of by some of our trustees and benefactors. Windbag holds a high place in their esteem and President Spencer does not dare to interfere with him. He's a pseudo-scholar, and he's a pseudo-saint too. Unctuous, you said – yes, unctuous and hypocritical. He reminds me of that Dickens character who was likened to a signpost because he pointed out the way to take but never took it himself. Did you hear Windbag's sermon in chapel last Sunday? It was extraordinary – he took a text from Saint Paul "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools", and he thundered against modern science, against me in particular, with unquestionable cleverness. He's really an amazingly able speaker. And what a flatterer! He's discovered an ingenious method of buttering up the Scrippses, the Higgineses, and the Mitchells; he's begun to write a book on the characteristics which should be developed in students in order to turn them into important business men, and he is continually consulting these pontiffs, asking them respectfully to what trait they owe their unprecedented success as distillers, metallurgists, and bankers. Each one of them is proud to be used as a model and Windbag

PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION

makes valuable friends among the powers that rule us. He neither admits his ambition nor puts forward his candidature, but two or three of us see how things are shaping and have decided to thwart his designs.'

'I should think you would have little difficulty. Who would hesitate between Windbag and Phillips?'

'I don't agree with you there. The very men who do the choosing will hesitate, for Phillips's fine qualities are not very easily perceived. Windbag goes in for politics as well as education, and I sometimes wonder whether he's got Woodrow Wilson in his mind and imagines that the presidency of Westmouth University may be a step towards the Presidency of the United States. He boasts of being a man of action and talks scornfully of President Spencer's flabbiness and of an effeminate faculty - that's you and me, Dumoulin. These violent propensities appeal to certain members of the board of trustees who are sincerely alarmed by Phillips's leniency. Then there is Mrs. Phillips, who, it must be confessed, is not one of his trump cards. You know what she's like, she's well-intentioned but rather absurd.'

'Of course I do; she's a legendary character.'

THE 'THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

I knew Mrs. Phillips quite well, for she had often asked me to tea so that we might talk about French poets. She boasted of being 'artistic' and had a genuine fondness for poetry, music, and painting. It was unfortunate for her that, at a time when the young men at Westmouth bestowed all their admiration upon Hemingway, Picasso, or Stravinski, she had remained faithful to the fashions in books and clothes which prevailed in 1900. Westmouth considered it comic when this enormous woman (she was as big as the Melpomene in the Louvre) entered a drawing-room robed like a figure in a pre-Raphaelite picture, or when she recited poems by François Coppée, Sully Prudhomme, or Longfellow in her indescribable accent. Occasionally she would invite a group of professors and their wives to hear her read her own compositions, and it is high praise of Westmouth's kindness when I say that no one laughed, that everyone listened patiently, and that after twenty-five years of residence at the university she has no suspicion of the effect she produced at these gatherings.

I had been told, soon after my arrival, of one thing which touched me deeply. A brilliant and rebellious student who later became a fashionable novelist chose Mrs. Phillips for the central character

PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION

in one of his books and painted a far too life-like portrait of her. The first member of the faculty to read this novel was filled with sympathy for Mrs. Phillips when he realized how deeply she would be hurt by it. He informed his colleagues at once and a veritable conspiracy was formed to keep it from her and her husband. All the copies in the local bookshop were bought up, and the one in the Library was, miraculously, always 'out', as well as the magazines containing reviews. In order to avoid accidental disclosures, they all swore never to speak of the book anywhere, and such was the success of this plot that, when we arrived, ten years afterward, Mrs. Phillips was still wearing her pre-Raphaelite gowns and reciting Sully Prudhomme's poems without suspecting that she was copying her own caricature.

'Of course Mrs. Phillips's culture is out of date,' I said, 'but it's nevertheless genuine, and she's such a good sort, really.'

'Certainly she is, Dumoulin, but just imagine how an unscrupulous adversary might take advantage of her little absurdities. You and I know that she is one of the nicest people in the world and that if she were to become the First Lady of Westmouth we would love and respect her. It would, however,

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

be quite easy to give the less well-informed among the trustees, who are lacking in proper Westmouth spirit, a very different idea of her. And besides . . .’

At that moment, the parlour-maid opened the door of Hickey’s study.

‘Professor Windbag, sir.’

I took my leave, and, as I crossed the entrance-hall, greeted the eagle-faced, broad-shouldered visitor.

CHAPTER XII

PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS

WINDBAG's visit to Hickey in the midst of our talk about him made me suspect that the physicist had sent for the professor of pedagogy on some pretext or other so as to be able to psychograph him, and my suspicion was correct. I went the next evening to see my neighbours and found them both in an agitated frame of mind.

'Ah,' said Hickey, as I entered the drawing-room, 'here's the man we need. Dumoulin, my friend, you've got to cast the deciding vote. Gertrude and I have taken opposite sides in a serious discussion. It concerns the illustrious Windbag. You saw him here yesterday, and I suppose you guessed . . .'

'Yes, I guessed.'

'Splendid! What admirable people the French are! They understand everything in so few words. Well, this time the psychograph won its stripes. With its help I've discovered the whole plot. I'll spare you the details of my activities. I managed to leave Windbag alone for fifteen minutes; he sat

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

down near the psychograph and began to think 'Would you like to hear his psychogram? It's a very curious one.'

'I would like to very much when we both have more time. Tell me the gist of it now.'

'All right - perhaps that would be better. First there was a tirade against me for neglecting an eminent man for such a long time. 'These English think they can do anything! But he'll pay for his rudeness later, when we're at Lakeview . . .'. Then followed a few gratifying visions of presidential grandeur - a very timid and deferential Hickey being received with condescension by a majestic Windbag. "It won't be the way it was with that miserable Spencer, the poor fool has paralysis of the will. . . ."'

'Yes,' said Gertrude Hickey, 'you should have heard the film; it was terribly funny - kept saying over and over: "Paralysis of the will - paralysis of the will."'

'Then our friend considered, no doubt for the hundredth time (it's all in the psychogram), his scheme for his elevation and the elimination of Phillips, his most dangerous rival. It's a clever plan. First of all, he realizes, and I believe he's right, that the trump card in his hand is Mrs. Phillips's

PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS

apparent absurdity. The better the powerful alumni get to know her, the worse are Phillips's chances of being made president. He must therefore arrange for them to see the lady often, and, to accomplish this, he must make friends with her.'

'I've noticed his efforts in that direction for some time,' said Gertrude Hickey. 'He invites himself to tea with her and asks her to read him her poems.'

'Of course he does,' continued Hickey. 'He's trying to win her confidence. When he's done that, he'll advise her, for her husband's sake, to give several informal parties for the principal benefactors of the university. You can see what a diabolical scheme it is. His victim will bring about her own and her husband's defeat. And there's more to it; Windbag is a resourceful man. Thanks again to the psychograph, I discovered another extremely crafty plan to stage a series of rows among the students, at just the right moment to demonstrate the dean's lack of authority. The psychograph did not record the details, for he had evidently given much thought to the scheme already; there were merely allusions to it. However, I heard enough to confirm my suspicions that the man is a blackguard and has definite and passionate ambitions, and to realize that his manoeuvres

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

must be stopped as soon as possible. This is where Gertrude and I disagree.'

'Malcolm wants me to warn Mrs. Phillips,' said Mrs. Hickey, 'but I tell him that the poor woman is incapable of defending herself. She will never believe that she has been making a fool of herself for years, and she will be very unlikely to deny herself the pleasure of Windbag's flattering attentions merely because we tell her she must.'

'Gertrude wants me to go at once to President Spencer,' said Hickey, 'and reveal the whole scheme to him. I hesitate to do this, because it would first be necessary to tell him about the psychograph, and I cannot tell how angry he may be with me for using such means to pry into a colleague's mind. You yourself were pretty violent, Dumoulin, when you discovered what I had done in your case. What do you think I ought to do about Windbag?'

'I agree with Mrs. Hickey. If you warn the Phillipses, they will be terrified by the thought of such wickedness and will not believe what you tell them. They will, moreover, lose confidence in themselves, and will probably renounce, of their own accord, the position which we both hope to see them occupy. On the other hand, if you warn President Spencer he will be able to manage it all

PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS

secretly. He's so kind and he's got such good sense. As for your invention, he will, I believe, be far more astonished by it than shocked.'

'All right,' Hickey agreed, 'but on one condition: you yourself must go with me to Lakeview. I'll have to have a witness, for I don't want President Spencer to think me insane when I talk to him about a machine for reading thoughts.'

I agreed to this, and an appointment was made with the president for the following day. He was amazed by our news, and I was struck by the old man's quick understanding of the situation. Far from blaming Hickey, he congratulated him.

'Of course, Professor Hickey,' the old man added, gravely, 'you will have to make a public announcement of your discovery before the end of the year. It would not be right for you to be the sole possessor of such power over your fellow beings. May I see the instrument?'

Hickey had a psychograph with him and proceeded to take it apart for the president's benefit. The old gentleman watched the operation in silence, but with the closest attention. When he spoke again, it was in reference to the other matter.

'As to the Windbag affair, I think it would be unwise to warn Mrs. Phillips. Nevertheless, I

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

would like to consult Mrs Spencer, who knows the Phillipses better than we do; and besides, she will be very much interested in your discovery, Professor Hickey. Let's go and find her.'

Mrs. Spencer was not greatly surprised at our revelations.

'Well, well,' she said. 'You never know what will happen these days. And how is your wife, Professor Dumoulin? Is she beginning to get used to us? I hear that her Wednesday teas are very successful; the students enjoy them hugely. Well, well. . . . Oh yes, about that Windbag business - it would never do to say anything about it to the Phillipses. Poor woman, she would be miserable for the rest of her life. No - I'll discuss it with the president and we'll find some other way. Leave it to me, Professor Hickey.'

I do not know whether she or the president hit upon the solution of the problem, but it was a masterly one. The board of trustees met once a month, and at the close of the next meeting President Spencer mentioned his retirement on July 1st and forthwith requested the board to appoint Dean Phillips, upon whom he bestowed his unreserved praise, as his successor. Old Higgins, whom he had miraculously won over to his side,

PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS

immediately seconded his motion. The opposing members of the board were taken by surprise, they had had no reason to confer before the meeting, since no one but Higgins (who had held his tongue) knew that the matter was to be dealt with so soon. Windbag's name was not even mentioned. Phillips was accordingly elected by a vote of nine in favour and three blank ballots. Never had an election been put through so cleverly, and never had a successful candidate exercised less cleverness.

After the meeting, president and trustees went to inform the Phillipses of the appointment, and their happiness must have been an affecting sight. The news spread rapidly, and the whole university congratulated them. Windbag himself, his sharp features a shade yellower than usual, was among the first to offer felicitations. The speed with which the appointment had gone through surprised everybody, and no one except the Spencers, the Hickeys, and myself was aware of the part played by the psychograph. The five of us kept the secret, and the public did not learn of the instrument's existence until the occurrence of two subsequent events which I must now relate.

CHAPTER XIII

TWO INCIDENTS

I HAVE already spoken of the unbelievable importance given to football at Westmouth and at the majority of American universities. The students who were chosen for the team neglected their studies during the training season and practice took place in a high-walled stadium the gates of which were carefully guarded, for several years past, in America, the game had been getting to be very like a civil war. Spying flourished, and certain universities went so far as to maintain secret services in order to discover the plays and formations of its alma mater's adversaries. These methods are now frowned upon by the leading seats of learning, who have agreed among themselves not to use them, but when I was at Westmouth there was a deep distrust between rivals and a quite legitimate caution.

The results accomplished by such spying will astonish those who, like most French people, are familiar only with two kinds of football – Associa-

TWO INCIDENTS

tion and Rugby. In both of these games an infinite variety of plays are possible, the most effective of which must be improvised on the spur of the moment. But American football is more mechanical; to carry the ball forward is so difficult that, in order to break through or get round the line of defence, the team with the ball must accomplish its gains inch by inch, as did the armies in France in 1917. Long series of plays are planned, learned by heart, and practised; each of these plays has a number. When the quarterback shouts 'Twenty-three' each member of the team knows just what he has to do; whether he is to plunge through with the ball, pass it, trip up the man opposite him, or block him. It may thus be imagined what an advantage one team would have were it to know the other's signals.

Even during a game, great care must be taken to prevent an opposing team from discovering the meanings of these signals. Hundreds of ways have been devised to conceal their significance. Sometimes a captain and his men go into a 'huddle' to decide upon the next play in low voices; sometimes the signal number is shouted aloud by the quarterback but along with several other numbers. For example, three two-figure numbers are given and the middle one is the signal; thus 43-37-25 signifies

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

37; or the number following a 9 is the signal, thus, 21-37-29-30 signifies 50. But even these combinations are sometimes deciphered and the coach teaches his men how to alter them during a game, as codes are changed in time of war

I ask the reader's indulgence for this digression, it was necessary in order to clarify the first of the two incidents which brought the psychograph to the attention of the American public. I will describe them both very briefly here, since they were written up at the time in detail in newspapers the files of which are accessible to anyone. All that concerns us now is (1) that young Darnley was a football fan and was not only Hickey's assistant but also that of Westmouth's famous coach, Lovejoy, (2) that the Westmouth Army game was the high point of the season; (3) that the Army team that year was far superior to ours, (4) that the Army's cleverest plays miraculously failed, (5) that despite Westmouth's evident inferiority and to the great surprise of all the experts present, we won by a score of 27-15; (6) that after the game our coach unwittingly made one or two indiscreet remarks in Hickey's presence; (7) that Hickey made a rapid inquiry which revealed that a psychograph had been placed the day before by Darnley in the Army

TWO INCIDENTS

captain's room at the Westmouth Hotel; (8) that these facts were brought to President Spencer's attention, whereupon he immediately insisted that the game be played over again; (9) that this incident filled the sport sections of every newspaper in America for three weeks; (10) that Hickey, a physicist with a reputation in scientific circles only, became in one day as celebrated as a champion boxer or a gangster.

Suzanne and I found our once peaceful street filled with newspaper men; New York's ablest journalists had been sent out to cover the amazing affair. My neighbour was now front-page news and, as soon as my share in his experiments was discovered, I began to receive telegrams asking for articles on the thought-reading machine. I naturally refused to write them, having firmly resolved not to be personally responsible for compromising the dignity of the university. But some of my colleagues were less scrupulous and they may be blamed for the unsavoury publicity acquired by Westmouth in the press of two continents.

This publicity caused the second incident to which I have alluded; I refer to the famous Ladislas Kogacz case. Everyone remembers this brilliant lawyer who was accused of the murder of the

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

husband of the woman who had become his mistress. The furore resulting from the oratorical conflict between the district attorney and the accused man made the Kogacz case as famous as the Dreyfus case in a few weeks. After the conviction, telegrams poured by the thousand into the office of the Governor of the State, begging him to pardon the innocent man. The execution was postponed three times, the Governor, in great perplexity, having found legal pretexts for reprieve. At that stage in the proceedings, the existence of the psychograph was announced in the press, and it quite naturally occurred to the prison authorities to ask Hickey to loan them one of his instruments so that it might be placed in Kogacz's cell.

I remember the evening when Hickey and I, in the presence of our wives, discussed the question at length. Hickey was in doubt as to what reply to send the prison authorities in Pennsylvania.

'It seems rather unsportsmanlike,' he said, 'to pry into the inmost recesses of a prisoner's mind like that. It gives the prosecution too easy a job.'

'I don't agree,' I replied. 'If Kogacz is innocent, the psychograph will provide irrefutable proof of the fact; if he is guilty, so much the worse for him. I can't feel much sympathy for a murderer.'

TWO INCIDENTS

'Even if he did kill the husband,' interrupted the ladies, 'why execute him?' A man who commits murder for love isn't dangerous. Don't get yourselves involved in the affair.'

Hickey ended by agreeing with me; at least he realized that he could not refuse to aid the country he was living in in its administration of justice by withholding the benefits of his now famous discovery. He therefore sent Darnley to the Pennsylvania prison and the unfortunate Kogacz was proved guilty, not only of this crime, but of two previous ones. He was sent to the electric chair without further delay, and Hickey was more popular than ever with the press. This was a great annoyance to him, and he talked of leaving Westmouth and taking refuge in England, but even that would have been useless, for the psychograph was from that time known the world over and its inventor condemned to fame.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PSYCHOGRAPH COMPANY, INC

As will be readily imagined, American business men immediately saw a gold mine in the manufacture and sale of the psychograph. After the Kogacz case, Hickey was besieged by their representatives, but he could not bring himself to accept their handsome offers. He declared that it was not fitting for a scientist to profit commercially by his discoveries, that he should put them at the disposal of his fellow beings and consider himself sufficiently rewarded if he were honourably mentioned in the history of science. His colleagues reminded him that Lord Kelvin, one of the greatest of English physicists, had served on several administrative boards in America; Suzanne told him that if he did not keep control of the manufacture of his invention, he would enrich unknown people at the expense of his own children. I suggested that nothing would prevent him from using his profits for some useful scientific work. He finally agreed to see,

THE PSYCHOGRAPH COMPANY, INC

not the whole list of applicants, but the one who was the best known—the all-powerful Edward Fork.

Edward Fork was a radio magnate and also one of the Westmouth trustees. I knew him rather well at that time, for Hickey was anxious not to do anything his colleagues would disapprove of, and he had asked Dean Phillips and me to be present at the conferences. Fork astonished me; instead of the strong silent captain of industry, I found a man full of indecision and garrulity. Success had gone to his head (he had begun as the humblest employee of the huge concern he now directed) and he insisted upon telling us the story of his life. He spent his money rather childishly, Hickey and I lunched one day at his house in Baltimore—a replica of a Florentine palazzo. It was absurdly out of place and had a mournful air about it. In business matters he was fairness itself, and in his dealings with Hickey he did not try to keep the lion's share for himself.

'Professor Hickey,' he said at once, 'no one can predict what the commercial value of your invention will be. Therefore I won't mention any figure for the moment, unless you would like a minimum guarantee which I'll be glad to give you. My offer

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

is this. I'll form The Psychograph Company and give you a part of the stock in it, plus a royalty on each instrument sold. What do you think the manufacturing cost will be?"

"This is a difficult question," replied Hickey. "The ones my assistant made in our laboratory here with the help of several mechanics were naturally very expensive; they cost about \$150 each. But that price could of course be lowered if they were manufactured in quantity. I should think it might be possible to produce them for \$30 or \$40, but I confess that, without more exact data, I can only guess."

"Well," said Fork, "you can give me one of them and I'll have some estimates made at our factory. But the price won't matter very much at first, we'll be able to sell psychographs at any figure we like - \$100, or even \$200. It's a novelty and there is no competition; it's indispensable. We'll have no trouble at all in the beginning. Later on, when we want to reach the larger public, we'll have to make cheaper ones, but for a few years we can sell high-class models. That's how I did with my radio sets and we paid thirty-five per cent dividends. Yes, sir; when I started out . . ."

Hickey had heard enough about Fork's begin-

THE PSYCHOGRAPH COMPANY, INC

nings, and he cut in with a question as to the best name to use for the psychograph

'Well,' Fork replied, 'that's for our sales department to decide. I'll ask my director of publicity to talk to you about it.'

The next day, Hickey sent for me to be present during his conversation with the amazing Mr. Drummer, an intelligent man and just as downright as his employer was hesitant, but completely cynical. He spoke of the future buyers of the instrument with incredible contempt.

'Professor,' he said, 'in all publicity campaigns you have to start with a hard-boiled attitude about human nature. The public is vulgar, vain, and timid; it is also sex-conscious. In selling the invention which has come into our hands to-day, to which of these qualities ought we to make our appeal? We might try several, but let's discuss the sex angle first. In our modern world, which is artificially worked on by the press, the motion pictures, and the makers of perfumery, sex is the most powerful motivating force. I can see something like this: *The Psychograph and Sex* . . . you realize the possibilities here, Professor; a full page in colour, showing an exquisitely beautiful girl, half-naked. *Does she love you?* Psiki will tell you. I

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

think I like Psiki better than Psychograph. Psychograph appeals to scientific snobbism which has its importance – I'll have to think about that – but Psiki would be far easier for the larger public to remember. Here's another: a handsome young man is seated beside his girl, he is lost in meditation. *Does he want you? Psiki knows.* Then again, a husband *What has she been doing to-day? Will she tell you the truth? Yes – because Psiki is always there.* Then a charming couple in a boat, drifting towards a submerged rock *Our home life was going to pieces, but Psiki came to our rescue.* Naturally, Professor Hickey, we can do better than that; I have merely been improvising to show you the general idea '

'It's all very alarming,' said Hickey.

'Don't worry, Professor; we'll touch on the scientific side as well *After Freud comes Psiki. Are you a failure? Why? Because your past is hindering you. The Psychograph will uproot your complexes.*

'Couldn't we,' I ventured to interrupt Mr. Drummer – 'couldn't we make use of the famous French phrase *Words were given to man to mask his thoughts . . . the Psychograph will tear the mask away.*'

THE PSYCHOGRAPH COMPANY, INC

Mr. Drummer gave me a disapproving look.

'No,' he said, shaking his head contemptuously, 'I don't like that. It's too long and too subtle — much too sophisticated. No, we'll quote letters — letters from simple people *The Psychograph has brought happiness to thousands of families. Here are some extracts from letters received yesterday: "My home life, which I believed ruined for good, has been remade by the Psychograph"* "I thought that parents could never know their children; the Psychograph has proved that I was wrong." From a stenographer "I could not imagine what my employer meant by his silence and peevishness, the Psychograph has solved the problem and my salary has been doubled." From a diplomat "The Psychograph is the best embassy secretary I've ever known; it also works in the interests of peace." From a doctor. "At last I really understand my patients!" From a professor "I could never tell what my students liked or disliked in my courses; since using the Psychograph my lectures have been attended by triple the number".'

'Admirable,' said Hickey, frigidly. 'Admirable and terrifying!'

'Why terrifying, Professor? Your name doesn't have to appear in our publicity and we can do most

of our selling by the house-to-house method. What woman could resist a good salesman if he told her she could now discover the inmost thoughts of her husband, her mother-in-law, and her father-in-law? It's almost too easy, Professor. I like a foolish useless article to sell . . . but your psychograph — why, it's child's play, Professor, child's play! Still, we can make it a more interesting sales problem by creating some de luxe models. If you have no objection, I'd like to have at least three: The Conjugal, The Pocket Psychograph, and The Secret Service. The last will have to be made up in all sorts of different shapes, such as bedside lamps, letter-paper boxes, or gramophones, in order to disguise the instrument.'

I could fill many pages with Mr. Drummer's suggestions, but they would be irrelevant, it will be sufficient to say here that Hickey accepted Edward Fork's proposal and that the company was formed in the spring of 1926.

I have shown that the psychograph's effect on my own *ménage* was a happy one. The instrument taught us both to give verbal expression to our hitherto concealed thoughts and also to control dangerous meditating. I realized that it was unfair and absurd to expect purity of mind and mental

THE PSYCHOGRAPH COMPANY, INC

fidelity from my wife when I was not capable of either of them myself. Suzanne tried to get the better of her vague discontent and bad temper which were so annoying to me, and her sincere efforts in this direction were rewarded with success. Perhaps I ought to add that absence soon becomes a habit, that the news from the children was excellent, and that the rue de Fontenelle had at last been relegated to a secondary place in her mind. This explains the relative ease with which I obtained her consent to our prolonged stay at Westmouth; I could now complete the course of lectures that I believe was really interesting to my students; I was not obliged to return to France in the middle of the academic year, and, finally, I could be on hand when The Psychograph Company was formed.

It was easy to perceive that the American company would be a prosperous one. The newspaper publicity had been so widespread that the first salesmen were enthusiastically welcomed everywhere. The new apparatus was offered to those innumerable drug stores that carry not only pharmaceutical products but photographic supplies and gramophone records as well. One of Drummer's slogans was 'Are you a photographer? Why not become a psychographer too?' Even before the

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

lowered price which would result from large-scale production came into effect, New York consumption seemed to be unlimited. Requests began to arrive from Europe, and Hickey recovered from his irritation and distrust; he was now diverted by the adventure.

'My dear Dumoulin,' he said one day a few weeks before my departure, 'I'm going to propose something which may surprise and shock you at first, but you ought really to consider it seriously. Three weeks ago, Drummer received several letters from France; they were from unknown people, but they enclosed reassuring references, the writers of them asked for the privilege of becoming general agent for the psychograph in France. We were not at that time concerned with the possible extension of the company's activities, except in England, but now there is no doubt but that the instrument will be as successful in Europe as it is here in America. I'll come to the point at once would you be willing yourself to become the French representative of our company?'

'I? . . . But, my dear friend, that is impossible! I am a professor of French literature and not . . .'

'I know,' he said - 'I know - you are, like me, concerned with problems of education. Your work

THE PSYCHOGRAPH COMPANY, INC

is disinterested and you don't want to go into business. I myself had these objections in the beginning, and you were among the first to point out their irrelevance. Besides, you have been involved in the affair since its inception; I experimented on you and am somewhat regretful on that score. I would like to make it up to you. What I offer you now amounts to a veritable fortune. How many radio sets are there in France? Several million. Even if only a hundred thousand psychographs were sold there in the first five years – and that is a conservative estimate – your probable commission of one dollar on each would, I repeat, amount to a fortune. What about your children, Dumoulin? Have you the right to turn down a future like that for them? Consult Mme Dumoulin before you decide, and after all there is nothing to prevent you from doing as I have done; you can set aside part of your profits for research in your special department of literature. A still better thing would be for you to keep your professorship and hand over the agency for France to some trusted representative with whom you could share profits that would be ample for two people. My desire to have you with us is such that I will guarantee the acceptance by Fork and Drummer of any scheme you may suggest.'

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

I could only thank him and promise to talk over the proposition with Suzanne. As I had foreseen at once, Suzanne advised me strongly to accept. She was fond of money. Not that she was either greedy or wasteful, but she came of a family for whom the idea of possessing a fortune (a word with confused and crazy post-war significance) had retained its original satisfactions. In her world, a fortune meant power, success, and dignity, and she looked forward to the moment when she might announce to her father, her brothers-in-law, and her cousin, Adrien Lequeux, that her husband had just made several million francs. She talked of the advantages to our children, of a long-desired retirement for me with freedom for my own literary work, and she made her points so well that I agreed, with a certain inevitable apprehension, to accept Hickey's proposal — provisionally at least.

Before sailing for France in June, I had a conference with Drummer. He gave me ten psychographs of various models, a case of films, and two sound projectors. It was agreed that my final decision was to be arrived at within six months: I was either to become the general agent myself, or to propose a substitute. A few days later, Suzanne and I embarked on the *Paris*. We were

glad to be returning to our own country and to our children, but I could not avoid certain regrets at leaving my students and my fellow professors who had made my life so enjoyable for nine months. Suzanne herself had ended by feeling the charm of Westmouth, and when the ship moved out into the river, leaving the Spencers, the Phillipses, the Macphersons, and many of our other friends standing on the pier, there were tears in her eyes.

The crossing was uneventful and Suzanne's parents came to Havre to meet us; we returned with them to Rouen to get the children. We had agreed not to mention the psychograph, but before reaching Bréauté and despite my warning frowns Suzanne was describing Hickey's invention, its amazing results, and the offers I had received. M. Cauvin-Lequeux listened to her strange story with horror written on his face.

'Just what I expected would happen!' he exclaimed 'Not content with having poisoned the exterior world, the barbarians are now attempting to violate man's most private refuge. But you may be sure they will not succeed You've both fallen into the hands of swindlers. I know what they're like. Several times during my career I've had to deal with people who thought they had found the

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

philosophers' stone or invented perpetual motion. It's a swindle, pure and simple, they'll be doing time for it, you'll see!

This attitude was doubly irritating since Suzanne not only refused to support me when she, better than anyone, knew how effective the instrument was, but feebly adopted her father's opinion. I had long been anticipating the keen pleasure of seeing our French countryside again the apple trees in the enclosed orchards, the roofs of slate and thatch, and the little churches with their pointed steeples; but my father-in-law's jeering voice spoiled it all. 'Read people's thoughts,' he kept saying, 'read people's thoughts! By God's grace, I was examining magistrate long enough to hear more confidences than your precious gadget ever will. I know what it's worth. Nothing at all, my dear man, nothing at all!'

I resolved to use the psychograph on him at the first opportunity, and my exasperation did not cool off till the marvellous view of Rouen between the bridges and the Côte Sainte-Catherine met my eyes.

CHAPTER XV

MAXIME HEURTELOUP

WE did not get to Caen until just before the end of the college year, so that there was no question of my having to give any courses before the autumn; in any case, my leave of absence had not expired. I agreed, however, at the request of the dean, to help one of my colleagues with his final examinations. After renewing contact with the university and plunging into a totally French atmosphere, I found that the things which had astonished me in America but which had seemed nevertheless valuable, now struck me as completely absurd. I wondered how I had imagined that the professor of literature at the university of Caen could ever become the general agent of the American Psychograph Company. I very nearly wrote to Hickey, declining to have any further connection with the affair; then I remembered that I could perhaps find a satisfactory substitute, as he had already suggested.

After the conferring of degrees, Suzanne and I decided to use some of the money we had saved

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

during the months at Westmouth to take a villa at Ouistreham at the seaside quite near Caen. I knew that Suzanne could not long resist the temptation to ask her relatives to visit us there, but, having kept her away from them for almost a year, I felt that I owed her some sort of reparation. I therefore resigned myself to the ordeal as patiently as possible.

My vacation began in the most unfortunate manner, with a visit from her sister, Marie-Claude, her children and her husband, Maxime Heurteloup. Marie-Claude was a tiresome woman, but quite a harmless one, and I had hoped she would come without Maxime, for I was well aware of the fact that he disliked me as cordially as I him. His good qualities were perfectly obvious. His forbears had been influential in the Rouen textile business, and he was now struggling valiantly to keep his cotton-mills going. He had been an infantry officer in the war and an extremely courageous one, his education, for a man who had not attended a university, was rather unusually good, but he irritated me beyond endurance.

His politics, his philosophy, his religion, his ideas on the education of children — even his taste in literature infuriated me. As I have said, his opinions of me were equally low and we had on

several occasions quarrelled so violently in the rue de Fontenelle that the combined efforts of our two wives had been required to prevent a permanent break between us. In short, Maxime's arrival caused me great anxiety and distress

Here I must make a confession. The day before he came I could not resist putting one of the 'Secret Service' psychographs on the table beside his bed. It was in the form of a letter-paper holder, and since Suzanne was herself lovingly supervising the preparation of their room, I had to tell her what I proposed to do. I made her swear not to warn Marie-Claude, for Suzanne has never been able to keep a secret — at least, her idea of keeping one was to share it with her family in the rue de Fontenelle, each of whom in turn informed a whole network of intimate friends. So that I had soon realized that the surest way to guarantee the spreading of a piece of news was to impart it in strict confidence to one of the Cauvin-Lequeux sisters. This time I explained to Suzanne that, if she gave me away, one of the serious quarrels she so dreaded would inevitably follow. It was my one effective argument and she agreed to say nothing.

The first day passed without incident; our guests were rather tired from their journey, and the two

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

women spent a long time getting the children settled in. Maxime and I lay on the beach and had a conversation which owed its success, I thought, to our being alone and having no audience to make an impression on. I remember that we talked a lot about his factory, which, at one time successful, he now declared to be a heavy burden on him and his family.

‘What do you expect?’ I asked. ‘You represent an obsolete system. Don’t take that in bad part, Maxime; I’m not blaming you for being a manufacturer. You became one because of your father. You’re simply doing a job that you did not choose for yourself. I believe the system is finished, as Feudalism was in the seventeenth century. It was no crime to be a *seigneur* in the time of Louis XIV, but it was no longer useful. The king’s armies defended the country and the feudal castles were no longer required to perform that service. Something had come to an end and something else was beginning.’

Maxime lifted his head and rested his chin in his hands.

‘Your comparison is not a good one. It’s true that the eighteenth-century noblemen no longer rendered great services to the country; they lived

at court; they had privileges and no duties; they were exempt from taxes. Such is not at all the case with twentieth-century manufacturers in France who may be said to have duties but no privileges.'

'No privileges?' I protested. 'What about their profits?'

'First of all,' replied Maxime, 'many of them have earned none for a number of years, and this is not only unfortunate for them, but for the country as well. Besides, even in good times before the war, profits were legitimate and reasonable. If Socialism came into existence to-morrow, the running of your government-owned factories would cost the country much more than the five or six per cent profit eked out by the lucky ones among us. Capitalism may have its faults, such as lack of central organization, excessive competition, a corporation's lack of responsibility, but despite what your newspapers may say, it is not a costly system.'

'It's not so much a question of money as one of feeling. The regime you uphold is unpopular with the public.'

'You and people like you have made it unpopular, without really understanding what it is. With supervision and control it would be just as fair as government ownership; in fact, much more so. . . .'

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

'You're giving a far too favourable impression, you talk as if all manufacturers were like you – as if they all worked hard for a small salary. But the capitalistic parasite exists. What about board meetings and attendance fees? Those things are indefensible '

'You can have the parasite, for all I care. Make laws to freeze him out and I'll be the first to abide by them, but don't confuse me with him and don't tell me that I am unfair to my employees when I work as hard as, if not harder than, they do, for little or no remuneration, and when, moreover, regardless of social status, I am fitted by my technical ability to be their chief.'

It will be perceived that, though our argument was a vigorous one, it was perfectly polite. I cannot tell whether this was due to the fine weather or to the good resolutions we had both made before our meeting, but it is a fact that we presently found ourselves – a new experience for us both – discussing French politics without flying into a rage. I tried to be fair about Poincaré and Maxime talked of Herriot with moderation; we were both extremely proud of our sensible behaviour. At that point our wives joined us on the beach and everything was spoiled. Why was it that the four of us could not be

together without things going wrong? In five minutes Maxime and I were abusing each other bitterly on the question of Briand and the League of Nations.

'You fought in the war!' I shouted. 'You know what it was like! You and your friends will get us into another, with your uncompromising insanity.'

'It's you and people like you that are preparing the next war, with your flabby ingenuousness and your ridiculous devotion to the religion of Geneva!'

'The League of Nations is our one chance of avoiding a universal massacre'

'On the contrary, it is the surest way of bringing on that disaster,' he said 'If it hadn't been for quibbling at Geneva, the great powers would have come to some agreement long ago.'

'To plunder the small ones'

'Oh, rubbish!' cried Maxime. 'I loathe that sort of hypocrisy. Don't you realize that the whole of history is merely the story of the founding of big powerful empires at the expense of little weak nations?'

'Perhaps, Maxime, but you're speaking of the past.'

'And do you think our world will change to-day? Good God! How can people be so naive, so dangerous? . . . Come along, Marie-Claude; let's take a

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

stroll. We're here to rest; not to wear ourselves out with this kind of thing.'

When we were alone, Suzanne reproached me bitterly.

'You promised me . . .'

'I promised myself to be friendly and tolerant, and I was both. Before you and Marie-Claude joined us, we had been talking for almost an hour without the slightest mishap, but really Maxime is too wrong-headed! The truth is he respects nothing but force. If people were to listen to him . . .'

'Oh, do be quiet,' said Suzanne. 'I don't understand any of that, but I do know that you are both exasperating. You make me long for those Americans. You really do. Was there ever, during the whole time we were at Westmouth, a political discussion that got so violent as yours with Maxime?'

'Yes, several times; but that's different, Suzanne. America is not historically divided into two . . .'

'Anyhow, Denis, Maxime is our guest. Leave him alone, for Heaven's sake. Even if you think he's wrong, don't take him up on it.'

This method produced peace at dinner, but it made the conversation rather dreary. A disquisition from Marie-Claude on vitamins and growing children carried us safely but boringly through the

MAXIME HEURTELOUP

whole meal. Immediately after it, Suzanne suggested bridge in order to preserve neutrality. I hate the game because I can never keep my mind on it sufficiently to remember the cards that have been played, but I realized then that it was the only way to ensure a peaceful evening.

It will be easily imagined that I looked forward with some impatience to the moment when the Heurteloups would leave for the beach the next morning and I could get the psychograph from their room. At about eleven they set forth.

'Are you going to have a swim, Denis?' called Maxime, in a cheery voice.

'Yes. I'll be along in five minutes.'

Actually I did not join them for an hour. I wished first, by means of the apparatus I had installed in our attic, to hear Maxime's recorded meditations.

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

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CHAPTER XVI

SURPRISES

I AM anxious that this narrative, since it lacks literary qualities, shall be provided with authentic and objective documentation, and few recorded reveries (I have since heard a great many) have surprised me more than Maxime Heurteloup's did. I expected to discover reasons for hating him, but I found numerous ones, obviously not for approving of his point of view, but for liking him. I believed him to be egotistical and vain, but the infallible psychograph proved him to be a modest man – unjust to me, but really a good sort. I thought I was about to unmask a rather despicable character, and I found that he was, perhaps not the most exemplary, but one of the uneasiest and the least callous. May I ask the reader to give me credit for admitting my mistake after such a long period of hostility?

I would like to be able to quote extracts from this extraordinary psychogram, but, unfortunately, it has been lost along with many others from the numerous collection that has accumulated during

SURPRISES

my university career in Caen, Montpellier, and Paris. My memory of it is, however, exact enough for a brief summary. On going to bed, Maxime tried to read (the psychograph recorded occasional phrases from André Siegfried's *Tableau des partis en France*); then he began to reconstruct our discussion of the afternoon, and soon, in order the better to consider it, he put out the light ('eleven o'clock – out with the lamp', said the psychogram); whereupon he turned my abusive words over in his mind at great length, not bitterly, but anxiously.

' . . It's incredible,' he murmured (I quote from memory), 'it's really incredible! There I am in that mill in Malaunay from morning till night, doing a job that bores me, and doing it not for money, but because it came to me from my father, and because I'm determined not to give up a position that no one else can fill, and then a man like Denis, who has the easiest and most agreeable kind of life, treats me like a selfish brute I'm not that – I'm more like a martyr!' Filled with self-pity, he repeated several times 'More like a martyr. . . . Do I sweat my men? No, I'm sweated myself. My men's opinion of me is fairer than Denis's. Pay them higher wages? I'd like nothing better, but how? We haven't made a

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

sou in three years. Denis would say it was the fault of the system; he thinks I'm against his precious collectivism for reasons of personal advantage. I'd be much happier if I were working for a responsible government, but I believe in being cautious – in being careful to consider what human nature is like, and above all in not destroying what has been built up with such difficulty. I also believe that if the government took over our industries – even if it should do so successfully, which is not likely – the inequalities inherent in every society would still exist. If we go beyond mere words into actual reality, what are the “privileges” of an employer like me? He has a motor, servants; he has women if he wants them; and above all, he is in command; he's his own master, too. Is there one of these advantages that is not enjoyed by a government official? Obviously, he would be supervised. I'm a long way from defending the divine right of the employer; no one does these days except a few old fossils. Employers whose rights are limited by law can bring to society the precious advantages of initiative and responsibility. Is it a crime to think as I do? Denis exasperates me when he talks so positively about things he doesn't understand.'

Maxime then considered our argument about

SURPRISES

Geneva, and I realized that I had touched him on the quick.

'There again,' the psychograph recorded, 'Denis thinks I want war and endless quarrelling with Germany. Not at all - I want peace as much as he does - more than he does. The question is how to obtain it. I should have asked him how the League of Nations could . . .' Then, as we all do after a heated discussion, he staged a debate in which he put forth crushing arguments and his opponent - in this case, Denis Dumoulin - remained almost speechless and finally accepted defeat.

I must not allow myself to present Maxime Heurteloup as a saint, in my anxiety to make amends for misjudging him. His meditation was punctuated, as are those of all human beings, by insincerities, false arguments, abusiveness, sudden divagations, insignificant and unfair grievances; but the general tone of it was perfectly sane. His thoughts were not those of a dishonest man, plotting an aggressive campaign, but rather those of a courageous one, in circumstances not of his own choosing, who was preparing to defend himself. Though I was still a long way from being won over to his political and economic ideas, his relative fairness to me touched me so deeply that my attitude towards

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

him underwent a distinct change that morning I was to have subsequent reasons to curse the psychograph, but I will always be sincerely grateful to Hickey for two readjustments. one affecting my own *ménage* and the other my relations with my brother-in-law.

I found Maxime on the beach, and I was struck by the sincerity of the expression upon his thin, anxious face. My intercourse with him was now easy – even affectionate, whereas nothing of the sort had ever before existed between us. Life has finally taught me that human beings, when they are neither humiliated nor offended, trust those who trust them. Hugo demonstrated that at the beginning of *Les Misérables* ('Professor!' Suzanne would certainly say. 'But I *am* a professor!' would be my answer.) Obviously I cannot presume to liken myself to Bishop Myriel, and I am not naive enough to compare Maxime Heurteloup with Jean Valjean; I merely wish to point out that my brother-in-law and I had no trouble in becoming real friends. The causes of our fundamental disagreement had not been removed; we still quarrel every day – sometimes violently – but there was mutual respect behind our anger, not hatred. We contradicted one another like learned men explaining the same

SURPRISES

phenomenon by means of different theories, and not like partisans who regarded all disagreement as treason.

Shall I confess that I began then to build high hopes? In the pleasant atmosphere that now enveloped me I imagined Hickey's marvellous instrument might be the means of reconciling millions of French people who were divided by preconceived ideas, rash judgments, and ancestral vendettas. In the light of my own experience, it seemed possible that party leaders might, by means of the psychograph, suddenly realize that their opponents were not, after all, such dreadful people, and were, like themselves, but by different methods, anxious to bring happiness and security to France.

Alas, these high hopes were not to be realized, for reasons which I will explain later, but they gave me the impetus I needed to take an active share in the distribution of the psychograph throughout our country. First of all, it was necessary to find a man capable of occupying, in my place, the position of general agent for The American Psychograph Company. Towards the end of the Heurteloups' visit, Suzanne, seeing how well I was getting on with Maxime, suggested my offering him the post. He had had the wide experience in business which I

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

lacked, and I could recommend him to the Americans as a man of integrity. He, better than anyone I knew, could supervise the manufacture of the psychograph, and he had to make his living. Marie-Claude had admitted to Suzanne that the bad times were having a disastrous effect on their income. It therefore seemed quite natural to offer him the post; but could he spare the time from his mills at Malaunay?

After much consideration, I put the question to him. In order to do this, I was first obliged to show him the instrument and tell him of its properties. He was astounded and full of enthusiasm.

'You've got a fortune there,' he said. 'It's one of the most amazing of man's inventions – the most extraordinary one since the radio. But you're too generous. Why not manage the affair yourself?'

'No. It's out of the question. I'm a professor and I intend to remain one. If I left the university my colleagues would think very little of me, and besides, I haven't the ability to organize a thing like that. You could do it without changing your profession, that is, if you wanted to. How much time can you spare from the mills at Malaunay?'

I confess that there was a touch of malice in my offer to Maxime. He had so often declared that

SURPRISES

nothing but a sense of duty kept him at Malaunay, that I was pleased to be able to put him to the test. However, he came through it with credit.

'I would not be obliged to neglect Malaunay,' he said. 'I have to be in Paris two days a week to attend to the selling of our fabrics and could easily established an agency there. Nothing could be simpler than to employ a sales manager, and, as soon as it was decided to manufacture the instruments in France, to equip a factory on the outskirts of Rouen near my own. Later on, if things went too well, I could take on one of the Lequeux boys and break him in . . . In any case, don't pass it up; the opportunity is unique. May I examine the mechanism of the instrument?'

I showed him the three models Drummer had given me and he immediately recognized the Secret Service one which had been put near his bed. He asked me if I had psychographed him and I admitted that I had, allowing him to hear his psychograph. He seemed greatly disturbed, and when it was over he said nothing, but he grasped my hand affectionately.

CHAPTER XVII

PSYCHOGRAMS

ADRIEN LEQUEUX (the unfortunate hero of Suzanne's first psychogram) and his wife, Louise, came to stay with us that summer. Louise Lequeux, a little dark-haired woman, was always ill and seemed much older than her handsome husband. Adrien was careful of his appearance; his hair, turned grey since the war, had been dyed and waved; and he could never be alone with a woman without 'trying his luck'. He seemed, however, to regard these amorous undertakings as duties rather than pleasures.

'I don't like your cousin,' I told Suzanne, soon after their arrival, 'but I really don't blame him for his infidelities. Louise is impossible; she complains of everything, contradicts everyone, and talks of nothing but sleeping draughts, laxatives, skin troubles, and heartburn; that's not very tempting to a husband.'

'He was very glad to get one of the biggest

PSYCHOGRAMS

marriage settlements in Rouen,' said Suzanne, 'and now he's got to take the consequences patiently.'

'But he does take them patiently. He's unbelievably good to her, and small thanks he gets for it; she never stops scolding. I really do pity him.'

'Save your pity for deserving people, Denis. He wanted to marry her; let him suffer for it.'

I could not help feeling that Suzanne's severity was not unmingled with malice – perhaps even with regret; and this made me uneasy for the first few days of Adrien's visit. A large part of my time had to be spent in preparing my courses for the autumn, and during these periods of work Suzanne and her cousin took long walks together. I disliked this, and all the more so because I usually found myself alone with Louise on emerging from my study.

'Denis,' she began, on one of these occasions, 'do you have that sleepy feeling after meals, too?'

'Where is Adrien?' I asked.

'Adrien? He's out walking with your wife.'

'Why didn't you go with them?'

'Me?' she cried, indignantly. 'They said they were going to be gone for two hours. My legs would swell up in ten minutes.'

I could not listen to her and began to think bitterly of Suzanne and Adrien. Was there still

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

some bond of affection between my wife and that idiotic man? The thought was an unpleasant one, and I decided to psychograph Adrien as soon as possible so that I might be certain how things were going. This would be difficult to manage without arousing Suzanne's suspicion, for she was familiar with all the instruments' disguises. With some crafty arranging I finally succeeded, and I obtained a curious document, the principal themes of which I will sum up in the following paragraph.

'... what was the matter with Louise to-night? She seemed nervous and her colour wasn't good — especially after dinner. It was foolish of her to eat that duck. It's too rich — ducks spend their lives waddling in mud. I wonder if the Dumoulins use good butter — butter is very important. The cooking here isn't up to much; my insides rumble all the time. I wonder if she's asleep [silence and the regular sound of breathing]; yes, she's asleep. Probably nothing serious, thank God! We don't want another liver attack here. If the cooking was better, I'd be all right. Anyhow, I'm rid of Marcelle — and Beatrice. They wear me out. I can always think better when I'm away from those two vampires. If I carried on too much with them, I'd go off into apoplexy — I most certainly would, and I

PSYCHOGRAMS

don't want to die yet. Not for two women who don't mean a thing to me. The odd part is that Louise is the only woman I really love. She's irritating sometimes, but at least I'm always peaceful and sure of myself with her. She doesn't excite me any more, but that doesn't matter, and how safe is it, anyhow, to go in for sex with a blood pressure like mine? We have the same interests and she's got a lot of good sense. She manages our life properly, but those two crazy women. . . Why on earth did I ever take up with Marcelle? I suppose it was that time in the train from Bordeaux. We had the compartment to ourselves. . . [a rather long silence here]; well, I did, anyhow. The devil of it is that she doesn't attract me at all. We have nothing to say to each other. Beatrice is prettier and she's younger; but what a pest! She's always wanting to do risky things – take trips together and all that; she'd like me to break with Louise. Madness – that would be. Louise is a thousand times more important to me than she is. I don't need those two women. It's really all Aunt Helen's fault. How old was I when I kissed her that time? Seventeen? Eighteen? If I hadn't made that bet, and, especially, if she had given me a slap in the face as I expected her to do, instead of falling stupidly into my arms, my habits

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

might be steadier now. At heart I'm all right, but, oh, the life I lead! How strange everything is! What would I be like now if I had married Suzanne? She's got better health than Louise, certainly, but she doesn't know how to run a house. My stomach would never have stood it. Even this evening there was something wrong with that sauce rouge, I wonder what they put into it. Also, they keep their meat too long in this house, especially in hot weather like this. I know I'm going to wake up at two in the morning with that pain in my side. Funny how it always begins five hours after eating. What is it, I wonder? I often think I've got cancer. Didn't I read somewhere that one of the first symptoms of pyloric cancer is a pain caused by food passing through the pylorus? Oh yes, it was in that English novel Beatrice made me read. She doesn't realize that I've no time for reading. . . . It's curious, but that pain is never a sharp one; it's more of a dull ache. If it's cancer, I've got about six months to live — no more.'

This went on for almost an hour, proving that our Don Juan was interested in no woman but his own wife and that he was afraid of death and of making love. I could now look upon him as a rather comic person, and my fears evaporated.

PSYCHOGRAMS

Such seemed, in successful cases, to be the benefits of the psychograph. But there were numerous failures, for these interior monologues were continuous with certain people only. With others the thought-stream was composed of a flowing succession of images, and the psychograph recorded nothing but sighs and unintelligible grunts. And besides, my researches were unfortunately confined to a small group of people – my family and my colleagues. Social life was difficult in Caen; professors were received only after long residence, so that Suzanne and I had few friends outside the university.

I was naturally unable to resist the temptation to psychograph my parents-in-law when they came to visit us at Ouistreham. I failed in the case of M. Cauvin-Lequeux to obtain a record of any length, for he almost always fell asleep the moment his head touched the pillow. If my political talk had particularly irritated him and sleep was slow in coming, he would recite bits of Greek or Latin poetry (he knew the first canto of the Iliad and one of Juvenal's Satires by heart) in order to calm his angry soul; or, better still, he would proudly evoke some of the legal decisions he had pronounced in the past. Sometimes he tried to remember the

circumstances of a mysterious disappearance which had never been explained, murmuring, 'There are many more murders than the common herd realizes.' I should have expected the old man to be aware of his age and to show some religious or philosophical anxiety, but there was no trace of such pre-occupation. M. Cauvin-Lequeux seemed to believe himself immortal; he made plans for many years ahead, predicted the early deaths of his daughters and sons-in-law, and looked into the future with the confidence of a boy of twenty.

Even more remarkable were my mother-in-law's psychograms. Until then I had paid little attention to Mme Cauvin-Lequeux, I took her for a rather dull woman. I imagined her to be unaware of her husband's little irregularities, which were known to everyone in Rouen, and that she felt nothing but respect and affection for an old man who seemed to me barely endurable. She struck me as being overbearing with her children, full of external piety but nevertheless sincerely religious, very ignorant about life, and knowing no one in the fashionable world except the Lequeux clan, an old Rouen family whose name could be found on the thirteenth- and sixteenth-century charters.

Members of the Lequeux family had fought in

PSYCHOGRAMS

the Darnétal Commune against the local *seigneurs*; later, they had been aldermen and mayors of Rouen; at the beginning of the nineteenth century a Lequeux of the younger branch had been a senator under the Empire; after 1870 the family star sank, but my mother-in-law's pride was unaltered. In her opinion the Lequeux name was sacred. It was well known that a brother, Narcisse Lequeux, had gone bankrupt and, but for the intervention of my father-in-law, would have been charged with fraud, but Mme Cauvin-Lequeux would never admit his guilt. She considered divorce to be a crime, and though two of her Lequeux nieces had been legally cast off by their husbands after unsavoury court proceedings in which they had made the worst possible showing, she kept on seeing them, defending them, and treating them as the victims of evil schemers.

This family immunity, rather like that with which governments endow their diplomats, was not conferred upon relatives by marriage. The Cauvin scandals were pitilessly broadcast by her. Although I was her son-in-law, Mme Cauvin-Lequeux harshly condemned my very moderate political ideas; but she was able to find ample justification for a certain Brice Lequeux, an

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

extraordinary man who lived in Paris and called himself an anarchist

To my great astonishment, the psychograph revealed an exceedingly complex personality. Despite Suzanne's and my own preconceived ideas, Mme Cauvin-Lequeux was fully aware of all the family scandals; she knew every detail of her husband's peculiar behaviour, of Narcisse Lequeux's bankruptcy, and of her nieces' dissolute conduct. And stranger still, she hankered after a similar life for herself. Her own existence was irreproachable, but she was full of the most passionate desires and the bitterest regrets. Poor woman! I often pitied her as I listened to her psychograms.

How much more interesting she would have been, I thought, had she abandoned this stiff inhuman attitude and this uncompromising moral pose! Why this hypocritical austerity? Why should she invent blameless lives for all those bearing the Lequeux name when she knew the truth as well as anyone? I often discussed these problems with Suzanne, and she at last formulated a theory that I believe to be the correct one.

'Maman has always been a very virtuous woman, but she secretly regrets it and envies people like Uncle Narcisse and Jacqueline, who have enjoyed

PSYCHOGRAMS

what she has denied herself; and she envies them all the more because they are her own relatives and she could have imitated them. Yes, Denis, I'm sure that's the explanation. Her virtue irks her and it lessens her envy to deny that her Lequeux relatives are vicious people.'

This theory struck me as excellent, and so much more subtle (I say this without malice) than Suzanne's usual reasoning, that I began to wonder whether she might not be giving an unconscious exposition of her own feelings. One of the dangers of the psychograph was its power to confuse those who used it, with analyses and suppositions that sometimes took on embarrassing personal applications.

All this made our family life rather difficult. Being now familiar with my mother-in-law's inmost thoughts, I made occasional efforts to break down her painful reserve by suggesting ideas which I knew she approved of. But I invariably encountered astonishment and indignation. The years had firmly attached the mask she wore.

The psychograms of my parents-in-law showed two other characteristics that I have, to my great surprise, discovered in almost all interior monologues. One is the subject's feeling that he is intended for a

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

nobler life, that his faults are accidental and that he will be turning over a new leaf as soon as the opportunity comes. The second is more frightening I refer to the ease with which certain men desire the death of others who prevent the accomplishment of their ambitions, amorous or otherwise. The first instinct of the savage is to kill, and the psychograph has revealed to me more than one potential murderer among the civilized. For information along these lines I would advise the reader to go to the books of specialists in the subject, and particularly to an excellent essay by Professor Altermann of Zurich which bears the title: *Psychogrammes et images ancestrales*.

CHAPTER XVIII

‘GRAMMATICI CERTANT...’

WHILE I indulged in these experiments to satisfy my own curiosity – experiments which I was then obliged to keep secret, since their subjects had been my relatives and friends – the psychograph was becoming almost a commonplace in America. I had received news from Hickey, he told me that the company had apparently started off brilliantly; that Fork had managed to produce an even more sensitive instrument at a very low factory cost; that the psychograph was likely to be one of the most popular Christmas gifts for that season; and that his share in the profits was going to make it possible to build some marvellous laboratories at Westmouth.

My brother-in-law, Maxime, had been accepted by Drummer as the director of the Paris agency. He had opened an office in the Boulevard Haussmann and was engaged in launching the affair energetically and intelligently. Separate parts were made by several manufacturers and the instrument was assembled in a small factory on the outskirts of

THE THOUGHT READING MACHINE

Rouen Maxime's first scheme for introducing the psychograph to French people was to get the doctors to take it up; they would have to be approached, he told me, with great discretion by special salesmen who were doctors themselves. But this elaborate method had to be abandoned, for it excluded all others; no doctor would agree to recommend an instrument to his patients which was going to be advertised in the gift-catalogues of the big stores.

For a while, Maxime hoped that the government would become interested in the psychograph, to which a curious incident had drawn its attention. One morning an important official from the Quai d'Orsay sent for Maxime and asked for detailed information about our family, his military career, the psychograph and its inventor, then, with great hesitation and in strict confidence, he said that he and his colleagues needed urgently to know the real feelings towards France of a certain minister of a foreign power, and he asked whether the instrument could obtain precise information. Maxime replied that he sincerely believed it could and agreed to go himself to Geneva while the League was in session and arrange, with the help of the manager of the hotel, for a Secret Service model to be placed in the minister's room.

Unfortunately, neither Maxime nor I was ever able to discover what the psychograph revealed. Maxime turned over the recording to the official who had originally approached him and explained the running of the sound-projector. Several days later he received an official letter, thanking him for the great service he had rendered the country and ordering four of the instruments. This order was, however, not followed by others, and I do not believe that the psychograph is used to-day by French diplomatists

As a matter of fact, Hickey's invention was never taken seriously in France, by either the government or the general public. It was regarded as a most useful instrument in Anglo-Saxon countries, and in Germany, Switzerland, and Sweden; but in France it merely aroused a rather ironic curiosity. I can still recall the many conversations I had on the subject with my colleague, Martin Weber, professor of philosophy at Caen, as we walked beneath the luminous grey clouds along the canal, through country that was more completely French than any I know of.

‘Forgive my frankness,’ said Weber, after I had spoken of the surprising difference encountered by my brother-in-law, ‘but the French attitude seems

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

to me very sane. I believe you are doing an unwise thing, and when I say "you", I mean the men who are trying to get people everywhere to use this alarming instrument. It seems to me that you are not helping human beings to a better understanding of one another and that you are switching them off on a dangerous track. Your experiments reveal desires and intentions that are not really those of your subjects.'

'What a strange charge, Weber! Hickey's invention records nothing but their actual interior language. They themselves, in their own words, admit these desires and intention!'

'Ah, Dumoulin, Dumoulin – you're a better philosopher than that! But you're confusing will and reverie now. To will something is not to dream of doing it, but to do it, or at least to try to do it. You yourself could *say* that you would like to be president of the City Council – perhaps you do in your psychograms; but actually you desire no such thing. If you did, you would get yourself nominated for election. It's like the pseudo-authors who dream of writing novels or plays and never even begin them. They think a book can be conceived without being written, but it cannot be. You, with your knowledge of Balzac's procedure, must realize that.

And this distinction is no less true in our emotional life a man *believes* he wants to break with a woman; he will say it in a psychogram, but he doesn't really *want* to. If he did, he would go farther and imagine in detail the result of such an action; then his reverie might become a reality and he might accomplish the action.'

'Nevertheless, one can,' I said, 'imagine an act without committing it. I can imagine myself killing the Dalai Lama.'

'No, Dumoulin, you can't imagine such a thing – that is, not with any precision. You don't know him, or his country, or his palace, or his habits. You don't even know what your state of mind would be if you had actually planned this absurd project. I repeat, you could pronounce the words: "I am killing the Dalai Lama", but there would be no real thought behind them. If you did achieve this state of mind, if you imagined all the necessary gestures, chose the weapon, bought it – then, after this long process you would be somewhere near killing the Dalai Lama. Someone told me once that a certain Eastern government had hanged a man for naively telling that he had dreamed of the assassination of his king. The police said: 'If he dreamed it, he obviously wanted it to happen.'"

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

Perhaps that was true, but someone should have added "If he dreamed it, he won't do it." '

'Can reveries never lead to actual deeds?'

'Reveries have no connection with actual deeds. You can dream that you are piloting an aeroplane, but your dream contains none of the authentic actions of an aviator, because these are determined by the resisting element in which he finds himself, and this resisting element does not have to be dealt with in reverie. Similarly, all your psychograms are made without the opposing influence of other people, one's family, and all the human resistance that is present in the society we live in. Our feelings and our actions are formed and determined by pressure and opposition of this sort. Upon your films are recorded a man's imaginary conversations with his mistress, his colleagues, his children; it would be a grave error to regard these conversations as true indications of his relations with these people. If they were present, they would argue with him, and their incursions would alter his ideas, turn the course of the discussion, and bring it to a different conclusion. Isay it again, Dumoulin; your instrument is dangerous because it makes people think they are listening to someone's actual thoughts and projected actions, when they are really hearing nothing but talk.'

‘But, Weber, if one were to accept your thesis, all social life would become impossible. It’s entirely made up of the sort of talk you refer to. If I want to convince you that my political ideas are sound, what can I do, even in real life, but talk about them? I cannot act out my political principles before you.’

‘Don’t you see? That’s just why I hate political platforms. Anyone can outline a platform, just as anyone can make a psychogram. But a great statesman is a very different man from your clever enunciator of principles. A statesman is chosen for his character, not for his speech-making. It’s the same with love, with friendship; you don’t judge a person by his talk; his character is the important thing. It is the result of his past actions and the promise of future ones. The psychograph cannot reveal these things’

‘It can reveal some things. I know this to my cost’

‘Of course it can, but what it reveals is the complementary side of a man’s nature – his artistic side, his impulse towards escape. This is actually of interest if one is clever enough to recognize it as such. But the great danger is that those who hear your psychograms will always be inclined to accept the complementary part for the whole truth; and an

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

even more dangerous thing is for a man to hear his own psychogram. He crystallizes himself round the false idea obtained from it, the fluidity of his development ceases, he acts out of his reveries. In plain language, that is called insanity.'

'My dear man – you're going too far!'

'Perhaps I'm taking an extreme case, but the danger is there for everyone, all the same. Be careful!'

The events which I must now relate confirm, alas! only too shockingly, the fears expressed by the most intelligent of my fellow professors.

CHAPTER XIX

HENRIETTE LEMONNIER

I NOW come to the most painful episode of this narrative. After its occurrence I immediately resolved to have nothing more to do with the psychograph. The episode concerned my wife's eldest sister, Henriette, of whom I have scarcely spoken except in connection with the unpleasant relations that existed between her husband, Jerome Lemonnier, and my parents-in-law. Nevertheless (I confess it the more willingly because my feelings for her were always perfectly innocent) Henriette had, since the day of my marriage, occupied an important place in my thoughts and affections. She was the most beautiful of the three Cauvin-Lequeux sisters. Suzanne had never liked her, and she gave me to understand in one of her moments of frankness that this antipathy was largely due to jealousy. Henriette was clever as well as beautiful, and she had a lovely singing voice. Her parents, therefore, had every reason to anticipate a brilliant marriage for her.

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

But Henriette Cauvin-Lequoux reached the age of twenty-five without choosing a husband. Quite a number of important Rouen men – manufacturers, government officials, and doctors – were anxious to marry her, but she declared that all of them bored her. I had several talks with her after her rejection of these men, and I concluded that her disdain was assumed, that she was actually suffering from a kind of morbid shyness. The strange thing was that, at twenty-six, she suddenly accepted the addresses of Jerome Lemonnier, the most insignificant of men, the laziest and the most unworthy of her. He was one of those peculiar individuals who fail at every profession because failure is somehow inherent in their character. Jerome Lemonnier never did any work; he never considered himself adequately paid for trouble he had not taken, was always on the point of becoming a director in some huge company, and borrowed from everyone who came into contact with him in order to live until the great day of his success which, if one believed him, was imminent.

How could Henriette care for him? Why did she remain faithful to him when he betrayed her in the most disgraceful manner? Why did she permit him to plunder her parents whom she respected as deeply as did her two sisters? It was all very

mysterious She realized that I was very fond of her and occasionally spoke to me frankly

'Look at my husband's eyes,' she once said as we sat together in the drawing-room in the rue de Fontenelle, 'look at his eyes He's the devil'

After her marriage, several men fell in love with her; one in particular, an unmarried colleague of mine named Jarousseau who was staying with us. He was an able mathematician and a delightful musician. Henriette sang to his accompaniment on the piano and took several walks with him in the country I teased her about him.

'Oh, Denis,' she said, with a sigh, 'if you only knew how he bores me!'

'But, Henriette, Jarousseau is a most delightful man. You're terrible; everyone bores you.'

'No,' she answered, gravely, 'there's one man who doesn't, and that's my husband'

She had been in a completely disorganized state of mind ever since our return from America. Just as Suzanne had feared, she had succeeded during our absence in persuading her father to mortgage the house and lend her and her husband a rather large sum of money. A little later the formidable Jerome left for Cannes with another woman. In October we urged Henriette, who was

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

miserable in her lonely Rouen apartment, to come to visit us in Caen.

'No, I'd better stay where I am. I like Caen enormously, but, just now, the things I like don't appeal to me. Lovely country like that makes me want to die '

We finally succeeded in persuading her to come, and during her visit I did my best to bring back her taste for life.

'Why won't you sing for us, Henriette? I love your voice, and Suzanne will be delighted to accompany you.'

'No, Denis,' she answered. 'You're very kind to me, but I've lost my courage. I haven't looked at any music for six months. What do you expect? When a woman's emotional life is out of gear she can do nothing. We're like poor weak plants, we need men to stake us up, and when there is no stake, as in my case, our flower trails in the mud '

'That's not true,' said Suzanne, 'and it's very wrong of you to say such things to Denis, who is only too apt to believe them. I know several women who live alone quite happily.'

'I would like to know the truth about them,' replied Henriette. 'Living alone is really a cowardly way of avoiding problems.'

HENRIETTE LEMONNIER

'But no one wants you to live alone, Henriette. You are charming . . .'

'Thank you, Denis . . .'

'No, I'm merely stating a fact. Plenty of men would like nothing better than to keep you company.'

'You're wrong, Denis. It's true — there was a time when I was not ugly, but you're wrong if you think men care so much for beauty or fine feelings. What most of them want is an obliging woman, easy to get on with, especially in France where men are not romantic. They're happier that way, perhaps, but it's boring for the women.'

'You're judging all Frenchmen by Jerome,' said Suzanne. 'Fortunately, they're not all like him.'

'But Jerome is one of the best,' said Henriette, with a strange vehemence. 'You would be astonished at the tenderness of his letters. If I should try to get a divorce, they would spoil my chances.'

'Burn them, then.'

'Oh no, that would be a shame. He writes very well, and with a curious simplicity.'

Suzanne was genuinely sorry for her sister at such moments and made every effort to be affectionate, but she merely succeeded in being clumsy. She asked too many questions, stirred up the dregs

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

Henriette had spoken about, and irritated an emotional wound that should have been protected. Later, when we were alone, I apologized for her.

'Suzanne loves you very much, Henriette. She is full of good intentions, but sometimes clumsy about showing them. I'm afraid she often hurts your feelings.'

'Oh, that's nothing, Denis. I'm used to her. All women are cats, really.'

'They're not, Henriette. Don't say cruel desperate things like that. We're so anxious for you to be happy here.'

'I'm very happy, Denis, in my own way. I weep all day long and it does me good.'

She herself asked me to record her thoughts with the psychograph. I had not dared to do this, because of Suzanne's burning desire to penetrate her sister's secret life.

'This is what I want you to do, Denis: don't warn me, but arrange to get me in a meditative mood. You must proceed as though you were trying to take a snapshot of someone without his knowing it. Then you must give me the film, show me how I can hear it, and swear to me that you will never listen to it yourself. The experiment is for me alone; there are so many things to learn about myself.'

HENRIETTE LEMONNIER

I held back as long as I could, but finally gave in. I was weak where Henriette was concerned. Long observation was necessary before I could fix upon a time when she would suspect nothing. Then, by a fatal coincidence, a new model arrived from America which neither she nor Suzanne could recognize and a psychogram was easily obtained

Poor Henriette! When I gave her the film, she was more cheerful than I had seen her for a long time. I can still hear her quick step upon the stairs leading to the attic, where I had installed the sound-projector. We chose a Thursday, since that was the day when Suzanne took the children to their music lessons and their gymnasium work; she left the house at two o'clock and did not return until five

There was an expression of serene beauty upon Henriette's face as I explained the running of the projector to her. She thanked me with an adorable smile

'Bravo, Denis. You're the perfect teacher. No wonder your students admire you.'

I went off to the university to supervise some October examinations, but I was so curious to know what Henriette's reactions would be after she had heard her psychogram that I curtailed my duties and hurried back to her. Despite my haste, she

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

had left the attic. I knocked at the door of her room.

'Henriette! Henriette! Where are you?'

Our servant appeared in the corridor.

'Mme Lemonnier has gone, sir.'

'Gone?'

'Yes, sir. She asked me to help with her packing. She telephoned to the station and then called a cab.'

'What did Mme Dumoulin say?'

'She hasn't come in yet.'

'But why didn't you send for me?'

'Me, sir? I didn't know . . . I had no orders. Mme Lemonnier said that you knew about it, sir.'

'And she left nothing for me?'

'Yes, sir. There is a letter for you on your desk.'

'Denis, my dear, don't be too angry with me. I have just realized, from my own words, how unhappy I am. I can't bear to talk now, even with you who are so fond of me. Please don't be sorry that you granted my request. The experiment only confirmed what I knew and was trying to forget. The only difference is that, thanks to your little machine, my unhappy thoughts have taken verbal

HENRIETTE LEMONNIER

shape and cannot now be so easily banished from my mind. Not only do I know now that my life is hopeless, but *I know that I know it*. Perhaps it is better so. *Au revoir*, Denis. You have been a faithful friend in my worst moments. Explain to Suzanne what has happened, and tell her that I love her in spite of our little differences. I go first to Rouen, and then, if he will have me, I shall join Jerome at Cannes.'

I will set down the subsequent happenings as briefly as possible; even to-day their recital is very painful to me. First we had a letter from Mme Cauvin-Lequeux, telling us of Henriette's arrival in Rouen and her departure for Cannes. There, she was to have joined Jerome, but he had evidently made still another conquest, for he wrote to her that he could not meet her for two days and asked her to wait for him at the hotel. The following day Henriette hired a little boat and went for a sail among the islands. There was nothing unusual in that, for she was a fine swimmer and an expert at handling a sailing boat; she delighted in solitary expeditions of the sort.

The empty boat was found several hours later by a motor-launch and towed into the harbour.

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

The next day Henriette's body was washed up on the little beach at La Napoule. There was no trace of a wound, and her husband and family were able to regard her death as an accident. But the tragic event had followed too closely upon Henriette's encounter with the verbal record of her thoughts for me to share their view.

CHAPTER XX

EPILOGUE

I WAS so disturbed and so deeply moved by Henriette's death that I was unable for months to endure the sight or the mention of the sinister instrument which I felt sure had been the cause of it. The thought that the imprudence of her best friend had perhaps been responsible for those despairing days, was unbearable. Suzanne, though she had never liked her sister, heartily approved when I decided to destroy all the psychographs in our possession. She had always hated the instruments, anyhow, and was secretly pleased to see them broken up

During the next few months, Maxime Heurteloup, who was still occupied with the distribution of the psychograph in France, often tried to interest me in the progress of our joint enterprise, but I begged him not to speak in my presence of a subject which was now painful to me, in fact, unendurable. Not until three years later could I summon up

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the courage to discuss the progress of the French Psychograph Company with him.

I was greatly surprised by what he told me after such a long interval without news of the affair. Contrary to my own prediction (and in accordance with Martin Weber's) Hickey's invention had had no success in our country. The newspapers soon ceased to mention it, public curiosity waned, and its space in the catalogues gradually shrank to the size of that given to outmoded games like diabolio. Maxime made money at first, but in the second year he was obliged to cut his expenses, give up a large part of his office space in the Boulevard Haussmann, and reduce his staff. It now required only one salesman and one stenographer to handle the extremely restricted business. The rare orders that came in were only too easily filled. Profits were therefore small and my share in them was negligible.

Maxime told me that the American Company had been brilliantly successful, but only at the beginning. American Catholics (known to be a large and influential section of the population) had been forbidden to use the instrument in a Papal letter, the *Bona Conscientia* Encyclic. Other Americans soon ceased to regard it as effective. Its

EPILOGUE

most intelligent users concluded, as my friend Weber had done, that the 'truth' revealed by the psychograph did not represent the actual content of thought. Numerous tragedies similar to the one which had resulted in the death of my poor sister-in-law were attributed to the instrument by the courts, and violent indignation flamed up.

An effective opposition to the psychographs still in use was organized by intelligent Americans. An army staff perfects its methods of defence simultaneously with those for attacking, and those who wished to protect their inmost thoughts against the assaults of the instrument had proceeded in like manner, they had their defence as well. The various models were soon recognized by everyone. In vain did Fork and Drummer invent new and complicated ones; they too were quickly spotted.

My original idea for a 'psychographic rosary' had made money for someone. Little booklets appeared in New York, containing the following 'If you have reason to suspect the presence of a psychograph at your bedside, recite a few of these pages until you fall asleep;' then came a succession of poems and mathematical formulas calculated to banish any sort of revelatory meditation from the mind. This protective scheme gave the possessors of

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

psychographs many long boring hours of listening which furnished them with no information whatever concerning the victims of their curiosity. They eventually became disgusted and put their instruments aside

Thus, the invention which I at one time imagined would transform human relationships had accomplished nothing of the sort. It had once thrown my own *ménage* into confusion, and a very happy confusion, because it took us by surprise. Human beings, in both their religion and their philosophy, try to maintain an even mental temperature in spite of the inventions that change the course of their lives. Against this new poison they rapidly secreted an effective antitoxin

'Do you remember,' asked Maxime, 'the high hopes for political reconciliation we based on Hickey's invention after that amazing experiment with the foreign minister? Alas! men of our kind are rare. A hundred times this sort of thing has happened by means of a sincerely recorded psychogram I proved to a fanatical politician that, despite his contrary opinion, a certain opponent of his was a loyal citizen who really had the interests of his country at heart. First there was incredulous surprise, then a rather long silence, uneasiness, and

EPILOGUE

dissatisfaction, later, the storm broke and I was accused of promulgating disunion by means of vicious propaganda. The truth is, you see, that men cling to their divisions and he who breaks them down is regarded as an enemy. And who knows? Perhaps they are right. Perhaps effective action can be brought about only by means of violent, obstinate, and irrational convictions. However this may be, I have no desire to martyrize myself; the role of conciliator is an ungrateful one. Thus, one more failure for our unfortunate instrument.'

I asked him whether the extra work had interfered with his duties at Malaunay, and he assured me that it had not. He devoted a very few hours a week to the moribund agency. He had given up the manufacture of the psychograph in France; the Baltimore factory now sent him the separate parts to be assembled.

The adventure which I had once thought so important was reduced to insignificance and mediocrity. Of all my hopes and fears at Westmouth, nothing remains but a deserted grave upon which I was the only person to place an occasional bouquet of flowers, and a dusty third-floor office in Paris containing one drowsy discouraged stenographer.

THE THOUGHT-READING MACHINE

More than ten years have passed since the invention of the psychograph. Who remembers it to-day? Once in a while, during a visit to a fellow professor at the Sorbonne, I catch a glimpse of one, forgotten on a mantelpiece or in a pile of discarded toys, and the sight of it makes me think of that great man, Swift, whose *Gulliver's Travels*, the bitterest satire ever directed against man's wickedness and stupidity, can only be found to-day upon our children's nursery bookshelves.

In past years, towards the end of December, a Christmas card has arrived from the Hickeys with some simply expressed wish for our happiness written upon it by Gertrude. This year's card is inscribed by Hickey himself. With great difficulty I have succeeded in deciphering the tiny handwriting 'Interior language is no more authentic than ordinary speech; the latter is a protection against others and the former against ourselves.'

I handed Suzanne the card, showing Westmouth on the day of a big game, gay with flags and banners.

'Look,' I said, 'here's a card from America. Our physicist friend has turned philosopher.'

Suzanne glanced casually at it, then, without reading what Hickey had written, she gave it back to me.

EPILOGUE

‘That man always bored me,’ she said. ‘What a fuss he made about nothing!’

About nothing? As she spoke the word, it seemed to me unjust and severe. But perhaps she was right.

A List of Novels

arranged under authors' names, and
chosen from the fiction published by
Jonathan Cape

BATES, H. E.

THE TWO SISTERS

'Jenny, Jessie and Michael, figures of eternal youth, shown with all their tumultuous passionate emotions, in a beautiful mirror.'

EDWARD GARNETT

CATHERINE FOSTER

The story of a woman whose love is drawn towards her husband's brother, told with consummate artistry

CHARLOTTE'S ROW

'What strikes one most of all about this book is its extraordinary sense of beauty. There is not a false note in the novel.'

Manchester Guardian

THE FALLOW LAND

The story of an English farm and those who farmed it between the 'eighties and to-day

THE POACHER

A picture and a tragedy of English rural life. The life story of a poacher

A HOUSE OF WOMEN

The turbulent story of Rosie Perkins, country barmaid and farmer's wife

SPELLA HO

H. E. Bates's longest and most ambitious book, the tale of a man's consuming desire for a great house, and how he fulfils it

BATES, RALPH

THE OLIVE FIELD

A long and exciting story of the Spanish Revolution - 1932-3.

RAINBOW FISH

Four short novels of England, Spain and the Mediterranean seaboard.

CAIN, JAMES

SERENADE

Violence and passion in the lives of a famous singer and a Mexican girl in Mexico, California, New York and South America.

THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE

'The story of the plotting of murder, of the accomplishment, and of the sequel, done with a pitiless and picturesque brevity.'

CALDER-MARSHALL, ARTHUR

TWO OF A KIND

Two love-affairs, a father's and a daughter's; twenty-five years apart in time, but of equal significance.

ABOUT LEVY

'I urge all those who are interested in the craft of fiction to read this very successful experiment.' HAROLD NICOLSON

AT SEA

The ordeal of a honeymoon couple carried out to sea in a small boat.

PIE IN THE SKY

A novel on a broad canvas the conflict of class, of family ties, of different generations, and the forces of political consciousness.

CAMBRIDGE, ELIZABETH

HOSTAGES TO FORTUNE

A quiet, charming picture of a country doctor's family. (*Chosen by the Book Society.*)

THE SYCAMORE TREE

The story of a man who 'wished to give no trouble', and what happened to his marriage

SUSAN AND JOANNA

The parallel lives of two girls in a downland country of the Midlands.

THE TWO DOCTORS

Tells how the young Doctor John Anselm was received by the country people of Bradnall, and by the older practitioner, Doctor Murchie

SPRING ALWAYS COMES

The Russell family have to face a change of fortune This is the story of its effect upon them and how they made good

DAY LEWIS, C.

THE FRIENDLY TREE

A beautifully written love-story by the famous young poet.

STARTING POINT

The reaction of four young men to the contemporary situation.

FERGUSON, RACHEL

A HARP IN LOWNDES SQUARE

A family chronicle with the past strangely obtruding itself into the present

ALAS, POOR LADY

A tragi-comedy stressing a familiar aspect of late Victorian family life.

FRASER, RONALD

FLOWER PHANTOMS

A strange tale of a girl's merging into the body and experience of a plant.

O'FAOLAIN, SEAN

A NEST OF SIMPLE FOLK

The lives and deaths of a group of Irish families from the eighteenth-fifties to the Rising of 1916.

BIRD ALONE

The conflict between the Church in Ireland and a young man blindly rebelling against two of its most powerful elements

PLOMER, WILLIAM

THE INVADERS

Young working-class people come into contact with a middle-class family a candid picture of contemporary London life.

ROBERTSON, E. ARNOT

CULLUM

A girl's passion for a plausible, attractive, but dubious young man.

THREE CAME UNARMED

Two boys and a girl, brought up in the jungle, suddenly pitched into English provincial society.

FOUR FRIGHTENED PEOPLE

The journey of four people, escaping from a plague-stricken ship through the Malayan jungle.

ORDINARY FAMILIES

A close-up of family life in a Suffolk village, and of small boat sailing.
(Chosen by the Book Society.)

SMITH, STEVIE

NOVEL ON YELLOW PAPER

Pompey Casmilus thinks aloud – 'the cleverest Pompey' – and turns inside out for us her witty, original, wise and feline mind

OVER THE FRONTIER

Pompey rides over the frontiers of matter-of-fact into a kingdom of fantasy, but it is still 'the cleverest Pompey' who makes the journey.

WEBB, MARY

GONE TO EARTH

'No one of our day has a greater power of evoking natural beauty.'

JOHN BUCHAN

SEVEN FOR A SECRET

'Her work is alive with the fiery genius of sympathy, pity and awe.'

ROBERT LYND

PRECIOUS BANE

'A revelation not of unearthly but of earthly beauty.'

RT. HON. STANLEY BALDWIN

WEBB, MARY—continued

THE GOLDEN ARROW

'A man is lured into the ancient and mazy dance of madness by the heathen spirit of fear' G. K. CHESTERTON

THE HOUSE IN DORMER FOREST

'The essential quality of her writing is primarily a passionate sincerity, this sincerity amounted to genius.' REV. H. R. L. SHEPPARD

ARMOUR WHEREIN HE TRUSTED

Mary Webb's posthumous novel of medieval life, and a number of short stories

WEST, REBECCA

THE HARSH VOICE

Four short novels of England and America, dealing with 'the harsh voice we hear when money talks or hate'.

WILKINS, VAUGHAN

AND SO — VICTORIA

A historical novel of the early nineteenth century. 'One of the best imaginative historical novels we have had the pleasure of reading' *The Times* (Chosen by the Book Society)

YOUNG, E. H.

MOOR FIRES

A conflict in character between two daughters: the keen-witted, sensitive characters are a delight

WILLIAM

'I congratulate the author on a perfectly delightful novel.'

HUGH WALPOLE

THE MISSES MALLET

A novel of the hidden fires in lives that seem as quiet as the old house where they are spent.

THE VICAR'S DAUGHTER

'The work of an artist' *Times Literary Supplement*

MISS MOLE

'Miss Mole is a darling, whom we should all like to know' *Punch*

YONDER

Two country families, united by marriage, find a solution to many difficulties.

JENNY WREN

'An adorable book.' E. M. DELAFIELD

THE CURATE'S WIFE

The quiet streets and pleasant houses of Upper Radstowe, surveyed with tenderness and humour

CELIA

The relations between husband and wife, parent and child, family and family.

